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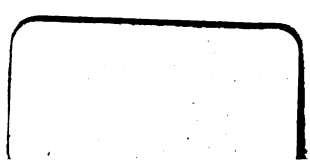
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ISABEL DE BOHUN,
OR,
THE SIEGE OF HEREFORD;
AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY THOMAS VAUGHAN.

HEREFORD:
PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM PHILLIPS, HIGH TOWN.

1858.

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HEREFORD :
PRINTED BY WILLIAM PHILLIPS, HIGH TOWN.

TO THE
PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS
OF THE
HEREFORD LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC
INSTITUTION,

THIS VOLUME OF POEMS IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

It was at first intended that the preface of this little work should be a somewhat conspicuous feature, and should set forth in some measure the object of its publication, besides treating of its merits or demerits. But on making a closer examination of the store from which the materials had to be selected, it was found there was so much of worth that could not be compressed within the narrow limits of a subscription volume, that it would be impolitic to rob its readers of one page which could be made to represent the muse of the deaf author. Other reasons might be urged why the prefatory remarks should be as brief as possible : but the circumstances which have so long delayed the publication are too well known, and too touchingly mournful, to be further alluded to ; and the contents of the following pages speak so forcibly and plainly in their own behalf, that explanation on the one hand, and eulogy on the other, are rendered quite unnecessary.

To select, revise, and compile the contents of this volume has occupied considerable time, and called for the exercise of some amount of judgment, the object in view being to present as acceptable an offering as possible to the general public ; at the same time not losing sight of the local predilections of the author. But the task has been essentially a labour of love, both because it was rendering a service to an afflicted and deserving fellow-man, and because it gave the opportunity to lay

before the public in a becoming garb, some of the productions of a local bard who deserves encouragement on the ground of merit alone. Kings have their laureates, whose purchased laudations are trundled out "to order," like the purchaseable commodities of our butcher or baker; but we have a local laureate whose simple kindness of heart and purity of sentiment flow spontaneously forth like the sparkling of the gushing brooklet in the rays of the sunlight, or the trill of the early song-bird at the first approach of Spring. What calls the happy smile to others' cheeks, gladdens also the heart of our poet; what occasions joy to others, inspires his breast with unaffected pleasure, and his blithe songs come forth from the "genial current of his soul," sweet and refreshing, untainted by misanthropy or selfishness, unfettered by sycophantic adulation. There is no under-current of party-feeling, no infusion of "peculiar views" on political or social questions, which so often puddle the stream of intellect, and foul the waters that should flow in translucent purity. No more is meant than what is said, except where language fails to convey the intensity of good feeling. No hidden meaning, no concealed sting, lurks under the gilded wing of humour: where mirth is aimed at, it is merry and innocent as children's laughter; but the more serious or pathetic strains are those of a heart bleeding for the sorrows of mankind, or yearning with love and sympathy. To rescue these "rough gems" from obscurity, and present them to the light as becomes their value; to clear away the rank undergrowth with which physical affliction and defective means of education had choked the sweet wildings of the poet's brain, has been my pleasant task. How far I have succeeded, is not for me to say; all I claim credit for is honest intention—a desire to benefit the author, and at the same time meet the taste of the public.

One word of apology is due to the subscribers, inasmuch as one of the poetic tales originally announced was withdrawn to admit a number of shorter pieces, many of which display a beauty it were not well to conceal. There yet remains ample material for a succession of volumes such as this, should occasion hereafter call for their publication.

The subscription list, flattering as it is, by no means adequately represents the sympathy and support accorded to the author. Many subscribers take a number of copies; and some, whose station and means are only excelled by the goodness of their hearts, recognised by liberal donations the appeal made on behalf of the author when he was visited by misfortune of no ordinary kind, and when Death relieved from protracted suffering one who had hitherto cheered his lonely way in life. The names of those who thus ministered to adversity are not blazoned out in distinction from the rest; but their kindness is not the less gratefully appreciated, nor is their reward less sure, because they in their benevolent dispensations regard the Divine injunction, "Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth."

As Mr. Vaughan offers elsewhere his "Tribute of the Heart," it only remains for me to make my bow, and solicit the indulgence of the public on behalf of the Author and

THE EDITOR.

Hereford, March 12th, 1858.

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ISABEL DE BÖHUN:
OR
THE SIEGE OF HEREFORD.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

DEATH with impartial stroke sweeps surely on,
And lord and menial topples 'neath his wing :
The peasant is forgot, and from his throne
He hurls the righteous and the tyrant king.
Nor doth Death war with hoary age alone,
But to the robe of youth will oft-times cling ;
And on the cheek of beauty change the bloom
Of rosy health, and fit it for the tomb.

II.

And as with Death, so 'tis with Time. His blow
Levels alike the castle and the cot ;
Bare walls and buttresses he layeth low,
Nor leaves one stone erect to mark the spot
Where erst, with bare or battlemented brow,
The one or other stood, but now forgot—
Or living only, in these after days,
In epic pages of the poet's lays.

III.

Oh we may seek, sweet Wye, thy banks along
In vain, for relics of those ancient walls
That once their shadows o'er thy bosom flung,
Embracing bastions, towers, and stately halls ;
Towers that have echoed to the minstrel's song
As warbled low, or warriors' hoarser brawls ;
Or caught, perchance, the captive's whispered sigh,
Or shut the bright world from his weeping eye.

IV.

The captive's freed—his weary soul hath sped,
His darksome deeds on earth done to atone,
Or wear a crown immortal on his head ;
Whilst of his prison-house a single stone
Remaineth not—its base and roof have fled—
Gone,—in the gloomy night of ages gone :
Nor left one low-laid cell so darkly deep,
Or high-brow'd battlement, or donjon keep.

V.

And yet, in sooth, in days long past, there stood
(The Minster of our ancient burgh hard by)
A fortress that o'erlooked both plain and wood,
And closely verged upon the banks of Wye.
And 'neath its roof, stout warriors staunch and good
Were wont to hold their boisterous revelry ;
Or, with beauty mated, proudly would explore
The mazy dance upon the marble floor.

VI.

And from its walls have twanged the pliant bows,
Propelling swiftly-wing'd and barbéd darts,
That thinn'd the ranks of bold advancing foes,
And drank the blood of false, disloyal hearts.
Or hence have sallied, bent on surer blows,
Well skilled in war, its stratagems and arts,
Full many a jerkin'd, or a mail-clad band,
Bold as e'er grasped a falchion keen in hand.

VII.

In stirring, dark, and troubled times it stood,
That Castle old—in days long past and flown ;
Days that went down in changes wrought with blood,
And saw none other at their early dawn.
The Saxe, the Northman, and the Dane have trod
By turns within its walls, and forth have gone ;
By turns expelled by that dread law severe,
That lies in edge of sword and point of spear.

VIII.

Such were the times, the days of which I sing,
And such the *locale* where my scenes are laid ;
The actors of the drama I will bring
Before ye straight, by whom these scenes were play'd.
Edward the Second, of Anjou's line, was king,
An imbecile, weak, wavering, and afraid ;
Afraid to follow where his will would go,
That 'twixt the good and bad, sway'd to and fro.

IX.

Weak monarchs are by favourites easy led,
And minions are for mischief ever rife ;
And so it was with mild, unhappy Ned—
They caused him loss of throne, and loss of wife :
And though he could not grieve when *she* had fled,
Yet in the end they cost him, too, his life—
For barons bold, in just rebellion broke,
And rooted up the ivy and the oak.

X.

Piers Gaveston first—a valiant Gascon's son—
A springald, young, effeminate, yet brave,
Did Edward shower his ill-got favours on,
Yet could not from the headsman's keen axe save.
Mishaps, they say, do seldom come alone,
And one befell the monarch still more grave—
For soon (as from historic page we learn)
He beaten was, by Bruce, at Bannockburn.

XI.

Despised, defeated, and with scarce a home—
The semblance of a king—he southward came ;
By folly blinded to impending doom
That o'er him hover'd like a sword of flame.
He saw it, felt it not, till it had come
In treason's *form*, yet scarce deserved the *name* ;
For those whose tumults shook his tottering throne,
Knew nought but blows would win them back their own.

XII.

For they had rifled been, robbed of their lands,
 (The Earls of Lancaster and Hereford)
Their rent-rolls had been passed to other's hands,
 For fulsome flattery a rich reward.
But they had joined with other warlike bands,
 And each had drawn the wrong-avenging sword,
And on its hilt had sworn a deadly feud
Against "proud Edward" and his minion brood.

XIII.

Just at this time basked in the monarch's smiles
 A sire and son—of humble blood they came—
Who, by false seeming, crooked ways, and wiles,
 Themselves enriched—De Spenser was their name.
The king, at least, had 'tween them shared the spoils
 Of others' lands, and faun'd rebellion's flame,
The glare of which in London first began,
Then, whirlwind-lashed, throughout the kingdom ran.

XIV.

The incensed nobles raised the shout of war,
 And lusty warriors flocked their standards round ;
Whilst the wild cry was echoed from afar,
 "To arms !—revenge !" with yoke-discarding sound.
And onward rushed—redress their leading star—
 Burning with hate, deep, deadly, and profound,
A mighty host that, urged on either hand,
Like mountain flood spread quickly o'er the land.

XV.

The war-horse—famine treading in his trail—
With bloody hoof pranced o'er the groaning land ;
In civil strife did soon his sire assail,
Contending foot to foot, and hand to hand.
But Pomfret* saw the royal troops prevail,
Beneath young Spenser's consummate command,
Who doomed the gallant Lancaster to die
A felon's death, and marred his victory.

XVI.

Flushed with success, he Hereford pursued ;
But brave De Bohun, soaring 'bove defeat,
Enabled was his fell foe to elude,
And to effect a masterly retreat.
The noble spirit is not yet subdued
Whilst in the heart one latent chord shall beat :
Fierce falling blows that strike upon the soul
Beat down by wrongs, again wake up the whole.

XVII.

And so with him. His gallant followers few
(Who caught the fire from out their leader's breast)
He quickly round his tattered standard drew,
And with his little band marched forward west :
Whilst hanging on his rear proud Spenser flew,
With rein all slacken'd, and with lance in rest ;
And by its barb he swore his foe should die,
Nor gain his stronghold on the Banks of Wye.

* I have not the means of knowing where the battle was fought. Lancaster was beheaded, I find, at Pomfret. For the same reason I cannot describe even local scenes as they were.

XVIII.

And while they thus their rapid course pursue,
We'll pause awhile, and leave them on their way,
To sketch the characters, with pencil true,
Of these fell rivals, leaders of the fray.
And first of Spenser—young and gallant Hugh—
Of youth the flower of that far-distant day,
When early all were trained to martial deeds,
Their swords to wield, and rein their fiery steeds.

XIX.

In graceful symmetry how few could vie
With him, on whom the gaze could ever dwell !
The eagle's beam shot from his dark blue eye,
That searched the soul of all on whom it fell.
And yet a time there was when it would lie
(E'er high ambition did his bosom swell)
Calm as the dew that gems the flow'ring thorn,
When woke from night, to greet the smiling morn.

XX.

Aye, *then* 'twere guerdon rich if on him turned—
When he in tourney fought—a smiling glance
From beauty's eyes. His manly bosom burned
As he his curtle-axe, or ponderous lance
Would grasp ; nor e'er relaxed till he had earn'd
Some fair and willing hand in courtly dance ;
And prouder still would feel the proudest fair,
If with Sir Hugh she haply mated there.

XXI.

How oft doth bounteous Nature's gifts but prove
To weak, unstable minds, a moral bane !
It seemeth e'en *themselves* they cannot love—
That all their beauties are bestowed in vain !
Would such but strive their "inward man" improve,
In just proportion to their outward mein,
How noble then, how like the beings He,
Their Maker, would His proudest work should be.

XXII.

But he, though with the "front of Jove" endowed,
With strength of limb, and soul-expressive eye,
No sooner mingled in the courtly crowd,
Than weak he sank in lap of luxury :
Nor found he strength to rise, until aloud
Arose that fearful and appalling cry,
That plainly told a wronged and desperate band
Of malcontents rushed wildly through the land.

XXIII.

Aye, then ambition, mixed with hate and dread,
Aroused his soul, his ill-got wealth to guard !
He saw it hanging as 'twere by a thread,
And at the mercy of a rebel's sword :
And once awakened to his state he fled
To arms, as far and near was passed the word—
The awful word, that maketh war a sin,
In pitting friend 'gainst friend, and kin 'gainst kin.

XXIV.

His rival, brave De Bohun, grey with years
Well spent by him in honourable strife,
Now stripped of all—his only bays the scars
He'd earned in his best days of martial life.
Yet even now, oppressed by 'whelming cares,
Though o'er him hangs the headsman's fatal knife,
His foes to crush him strive, yet strive in vain,
They strike a blow, but still no victory gain.

XXV.

And yet he fought not for himself alone—
His much-wronged country called him to the field !
For her he boldly buckled armour on—
For her he bore his battle-battered shield !
And for a gem he yet could call his own—
A jewel he within his soul conceal'd ;
A flow'r that had, beneath his watchful eye,
Sprung up, half hidden, on the Banks of Wye.

XXVI

Jewels there are, and brilliant ones, that live,
That have their being in sweet woman's mould !
Bright gems that oft-times far more lustre give
Than those that sparkle set in purest gold !
And flow'rs there are from which may man receive,
If nurtured rightly, sweets a hundred-fold
More sweet than those gay, fragile things can yield
That meet our gaze in garden, grove, and field.

XXVII.

Aye, living gems, and breathing flow'rs there are,
And fair the one sweet Vaga's arm embraced ;
She whom the Earl had left in safety there—
A daughter, beautiful as she was chaste.
And though misfortune's sadly silent tear
From off her cheek the rose had long displaced,
It still had failed, with its fast-falling dew,
To crush the pink, and lily's lasting hues.

XXVIII.

She should have been, that maiden, lowly born,
And lived in times less fearful and less rude ;
When trump of war, or warden's startling horn,
Might not disturb her peaceful solitude.
Yet was her lot, though fearful, mildly borne,
Nor was her gentle nature yet subdued ;
No,—like the clouded Queen of Night, her een,
When storms are passed, shone forth again serene.

XXIX.

Such was the Earl's bright gem, fair ISABEL ;
His flow'r, of whom we shall see more anon :
But here it was incumbent I should tell
A few historic facts as I came on.
We've seen how budding hope at Pomfret fell,
As dim it o'er the much-wronged nobles shone ;
How brave Lancaster by the headsman bled,
And how his friend in arms, De Bohun, fled.

XXX.

He fled, but not till hopeless 'twas to fight,
And when it would have murder been to stay ;
He saw that nought remained to him but flight
To where he could De Spenser hold at bay.
That spot was near, already 'twas in sight,
The glittering Wye before him silent lay ;
Or only murmured forth, in gentle strain,
A weeping welcome to its lord again.

XXXI.

He came, and with him came his gallant few,
Way-worn they were with flight, and battle-smeared ;
But as the well-known fortress met their view,
And told them they their long-sought refuge neared,
Despite of toil and wounds they onward flew,
Whilst from the ramparts loudly were they cheered ;
For in the van, though ragged, crushed, and torn,
Was seen their lord's unsullied banner borne.

THE BESIEGER'S CAMP—THE CITY.

Sad days and weeks had passed :—without, within
The city's walls had rose the maddening din
Of war. Without, some distance from the southern gate,
De Spenser, with besieging army, sate :
The Wye he'd crossed, from north to southern side,
And wild dismay had scattered far and wide !

Where Peace had dwelt, her favourite abode,
With heavy heel his prancing war-horse trod.
'Twas one to him where fell the blazing brand
He cast around with devastating hand !
The yeoman's house, or peasant's lowly cot,
Alike were levelled in one common lot ;
Nor waving corn, nor fruits that bless the land,
Escaped destruction by his vengeful hand ;
Entrenchments deep, and high embankments reared
Along his lines, the brow of nature seared ;
Earth's face he changed, its beauty ruthless tore,
As though 'twere needed for man's wants no more.

Sweet Vaga, queen of streams, bewilder'd lay
Within her banks—almost forgot her way !
Her path, that late wound wood and vale beneath,
Was altered now as 'twere the vale of death ;
Her beauteous banks, that then were spangled o'er
With gems of Spring, now strife's red livery wore ;
Peace with her rustic train had fled the spot,
And all appear'd, save vengeful war, forgot.

Within the walls, a foe more fell than he
Who prowled without, roamed street and alley free ;
A giant gaunt it was, that with sure blow,
Struck young and old, or fair, or valiant, low ;
It tore the babe from nature's dried-up font—
Its mother's breast—and stamp'd death's mark upon't ;
The mother, too, the matron, and the maid,
All in their turn were cold and prostrate laid ;
None could withstand—e'en he encas'd in mail
Sank pale and bloodless 'neath its fierce assail.

The brawny arms that from the walls beat back
The royal troops, in hand-to-hand attack,
Now strengthless were—their mighty pow'r had flown,
The souls that nerv'd them from the clay had gone !
Escape was none, flee where they would to save
Themselves 'twas vain, the foe no quarters gave ;
No place was safe, no sanctum was secure,
The Minster's marble pave or earthen floor ;
In castle hall or friar's lowly cell,
Fresh victims daily 'fore the tyrant fell.

Where foemen's swords and partizans had failed,
Pale Famine had, at least, in part prevailed ;
For, with his strength and spirits prostrate laid,
No help within, no hope from outward aid,
Supplies cut off, resources all but gone,
Each warrior moved slow, sullen, and alone.
And where he paced his sad and weary round,
Pale, soulless masses here and there he found—
Gaunt forms that late rushed forth in manly might,
Proud of their strength, and foremost in the fight—
Now stiff and stark around exposed they lay,
In mouldering mounds of mortifying clay.

Oh, fiend of Famine ! sure no feller foe
Was e'er let loose upon this world below !
Thou dost thy victims, vampyre, gloat to see
Die daily, writhing in their misery !
Thou hast no pity in thy vengeance—none,
But smil'st to see thy work go slowly on ;
And whilst the wretch hath life one pang to feel,
Hold'st back the blow thou should'st in mercy deal.

The conquering scourge who hath on battle plain
His hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands slain,
Compared with thee is far less dire a foe—
His stroke is prompt, and death comes at the blow ;
But those who writhing 'neath thy tortures lie,
Whose only boon it is to quickly die,
To 'scape thy fangs and flee—they reck not where—
Are still held back to taste thy torments here ;
E'en those, the rich, who thousands have in store,
Feel in thy grasp the pangs of being poor.

But one fair form moved like a beam of light,
Where darkness grew, unceasing day and night.
Where wails of woe rose on the tainted air,
All undismayed 'twas witnessed gliding there ;
And there—combating, with an angel's power,
Defying death, in death's triumphant hour—
Kneeling, 'twould show to glazed and startling eyes
The only way to where Elysium lies ;
The only "gate" by which escaping lay,
From war, from strife, from famine, far away ;
Or, whispering peace into the death-struck ear,
Turned pain-extorted curse to fervent prayer.
The stricken warrior, calmed, held in his breath,
No longer braved nor shunn'd the approach of death,
But mildly bowed his weak, enfeebled frame,
And died in blessing Isabella's name.

Oh, Charity ! thou pure and holy thing,
That goest forth with " healings on thy wing !"
Slow is thy step, and searching is thine eye
As thou roam'st on, lest any pass thee by

Who need thy ready aid—the more so those
Who in their hearts doth hide the crushing woes
That ne'er have yet been sighed in mortal ears,
Nor ushered forth, save in a gush of tears.
Ah, stay not to be *asked*, ye rich and great—
How many mutely have succumbed to fate ?
And, like to Cæsar, struck by friends and foes,
Disdained the outward show of inward woes ;
Have drawn a mantle o'er their pallid face,
As though a tear of anguish would disgrace
Their manhood—e'en in dissolution's hour
When falling, falling, 'neath superior pow'r.
Oh, look beyond the outward man, and know
That what may patch a hole may hide a woe ;
Gaze on the furrow'd brow, there trace the chart,
Or read the index to a breaking heart.

But woes accumulating fell and fast,
A sullen gloom around the city cast :
Its best and bravest could and would have fought,
If to the weaker fighting would have brought
A meed of succour—but 'twould not be so ;
They knew their wily, ever-watchful foe
Would thwart, as oft-times he had done of late,
All passing thence by port or postern-gate.
But one alternative—a doubtful one—
Was left the council to decide upon ;
And sad and bitter were the words that passed,
Ere to one mind the conclave came at last ;
For hearts were there that would have ceased to beat
Ere with De Spenser they would stoop to treat.

But others, dearer than themselves were there,
Less fitted war's rough usages to bear :
Yet *those*, the matrons, daughters, sisters, wives,
All held as nought the value of their lives ;
They yet had that the foe could never kill—
They had their honour, bright, unsullied still :
But pity, sympathy, and holy love,
Too strong (as either ever strong will prove
In manly hearts) did plead, nor plead in vain :
It was resolved a truce they should obtain.

Oh, fate of war ! how sad it is when *right*
Must fain hold forth the unwilling hand to MIGHT ;
When men must smile, and crave with guarded tongues,
Nor dare scarce writhe beneath their galling wrongs.
Yet oft 'tis so, and will be whilst the sword
Shall hold precedence of the peaceful word.

THE TRUCE—THE LOVE TRYST.

And now sweet Vaga, undismayed once more,
Rolled on her course, and recognized her shore ;
Leap'd here and there, as tho' in joyful mood,
Where'er her margin showed no spots of blood ;
Or, ling'ring slowly, curving off afar—
Swept sadly by where marked the foot of war.
Above, a golden sun, " with lengthening ray,"
Proclaimed the waning of an autumn day ;
And twilight, lingering as reluctant, drew
Next, over all, her veil of beauteous blue ;

No star as yet begemmed, to glad the eye,
The glowing azure of the deepening sky.
Below, the hills, in purple mantle drest,
Stood boldly forth, as Sol sank in the west :
No sound was heard, save from the hidden rill
That wound its course a-down th' adjacent hill :*
The hill whose verdant, gently rising base
Lay then, as now, in Vaga's fond embrace.

But sounds soon rose, as breathed the evening air,
Proclaiming peace was yet a stranger there ;
Or only sojourned on her native soil,
In mask of truce for thirty days, the while
War whet her sword, and rested from the fight,
To 'gin again with renovated might.

Sounds, like the fitful rising of the breeze,
Or distant murmur of the chafing seas,
When waking winds amongst them 'gin to play,
Came forth from where the fell De Spenser lay.
Soft steps of stealthy falling—clashing steel,
So low, subdued, as scarcely to reveal
Whether from river's bank or distant mound,
Arose that fearful, bloodshed-brooding sound.
What could it mean ? the sun that set but now
Should four times more the western mountain's brow
Gild with its golden beams, or e'er should break
The solemn truce, or war again should wake !
Could savage man, in more than ruthless mood,
So thirst to shed his fellow mortal's blood ;

* Dinedon.

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So plunge in sin, mad vengeance to obtain,
That oaths and solemn treaties are in vain ?
So said these sounds !—yes, men were busy there
Preparing axe and buckler, sword and spear,
And, holding honour's pledges nought but breath,
Were going forth to rapine and to death :
They did but wait the waving of the hand
Of him whose voice alone could there command ;
Whose nod was fiat, and whose smile or frown
Could cheer the drooping, look the boldest down.

A youth, whose humble garb yet noble gait
Bespoke and still denied his low estate,
And told that he, though as subaltern clad,
In royal troops a higher mission had
Than what proclaimed a captain's medium rank,
Now paced impatient Vaga's southern bank.
No crested helm his lofty brow oppressed,
Nor star shone glittering on his manly breast ;
Yet, wanting these, he wanted not the air
That plainly told a noble lingered there.
His jerkin green, bedight with homely gray,
Did one of Nature's master-works display ;
Enwrapt a form—complete—of beauty's own,
That would have stilled his monarch's tott'ring throne.
His pale, bright locks, in ringlets *sans* control,
Beneath his looped and pluméd bonnet stole
In rich luxuriance—waving, like a glow
Of summer sunlight, round as fair a brow
As youthful maid's, ere fleeting time or care,
With heavy hand had traced a furrow there.

But knit the brow, and clouded was the eye
That cast a searching glance along the Wye ;
Eve's beauties landward all unheeded fell
Upon his ken, and failed to break the spell
That seemed to draw his inmost soul away,
Far up the stream, to where the city lay.
The stifled hum of treacherous war hard by,
The peaceful music of the playful Wye,
The night-bird's song, the prayer-bell's solemn sound,
No chord responsive in his bosom found.

But soon a smile, a sad but gladdening one,
Like winter's sunlight, o'er his features shone,
For, looming down the stream, upon his view
A tiny barque, with tim'rous swiftness drew.
And in it (guided solely by her aid)
Was sitting one whose timid looks betrayed
A mind half doubting, half confiding ; still
Along she swept with no divided will.
Yes, on she came ; whilst ever and again,
From side to side, her eye with searching strain
Was cast—like some lone deer, when venturing
Its thirst to slake at some far distant spring,
Far from its haunts, its green and native vale,
And scenteth danger floating down the gale.
But quick her eye—(her heart no danger knew)—
As nearer Dinedor's flowery foot she drew,
Discern'd the youth, *her* spring, her life, her love,
Awaiting her upon the bank above.

Oh, Love omnipotent ! even in the hour
Of angry war, foes feel and own thy pow'r ;

Beneath the waving of thy sceptre kneel,
And own thy darts are keener far than steel ;
Confess them vanquished, even by a glance,
And throw aside the vengeful-lifted lance.
Ah, sure 'twere easy task for thee to move
Breasts warmed by friendship up to warmer love ;
Or make the hearts which yet but pity know,
Burn with thy fires as fierce as Etna's glow :
But oh ! to thy small hand alone is given,
The power by which breasts hard as flints are riven ;
Knees that no other force below obey,
Bend to thy will and own thy sov'reign sway.

With anxious haste, his brow inclining low,
The youth stepped forth, and clutched the gilded prow ;
Seized with warm grasp the soft, extended hand
The maiden gave, and led her straight to land ;
Secured the barque a drooping bough unto,
Then near its late and beauteous burden flew.
"Each blessing light on thy confiding truth !
This, love, is kind !"—thus spake the warrior-youth.
"I've much to tell thee—much I would not dare,
But for our weal, speak to thy listening ear.
See, sweet, yon moon, with bright and silvery crest,
Mounting with stately step the starry east !
She maketh here all light, where dark should dwell,
To suit the tale I've met thee, love, to tell."
"First tell me, Harold," interposed the maid,
Whilst on his arm a steady hand she laid—
"First tell me why, as sailing down yon stream,
I saw the setting sun on lances gleam ;

Heard that, in sounds subdued, which much I fear,
Forebodeth danger to my people near ?
Nay ! hear me, Harold—for I will be heard,
And as thou lov'st, weigh well my every word ;—
I came in answer to thy signal seen
As in my bower I watched the fall of e'en ;
That I am here must speak me true to thee,
As that I ask will prove thy truth to me ;
And, by our love, I charge thee tell me true,
What mean yon warlike sights which met my view ?”

The youth with gentle force her grasp removed,
And stood awhile as one by self reproved ;
As one who for a lesser crime was chid,
The while the greater in his breast lay hid—
Then slow replied : “ You ask me, Isabel,
That which I may, and which I may *not* tell ;
But what I *must* will every hope destroy,
Or fill my soul with almost heavenly joy,
As thou, sweet, shalt decide.—My dreaded chief,
Urged by the two-fold goads, revenge and grief,
This night has willed yon city—fortress—all,
By quick surprise and sharp assault shall fall.
To this he has been wrought for that his sire,
In whose brave breast age could not quench the fire
Of loyalty, though ninety fleeting years
With heavy hand had graven deep their scars—”
He paused a moment, as with sudden pain,
Passed o'er his brow his hand, then spoke again :
“ He—can I tell it ! he, the aged !—good !
At Bristol, yesternorn, had spilt his blood !

Died !—died !" the warrior clenched his hands and cried ;
" Not, oh ! not as a Spenser should have died !
Not in the field—the death-bed of the brave !
Nor fighting fell he in a glorious grave !
Not battling bravely with a mighty foe,
And dealing to the last his blow for blow !
No—murder—mutiny—without trial hung !
In quarters hacked, and to the dogs they flung
His quivering limbs. His butchers—Hainault—Kent—
The ruthless Queen—have now their footsteps bent
Hereward. But, ere their forces hither come,
Fate will have sealed, in spite of truce, the doom
Of yon proud city. Firm her sons may be—
May die ere yield their darling liberty—
But die they must ; no power on earth can save,
From finding each his home to-night a grave !"

He paused with sudden stop, and turned his gaze
On her who stood him near in mute amaze ;
Almost he did expect to find her flown
Homeward, to make th' imparted project known.
But she—she reck'd not for the time how near
Destruction lurked to those she held so dear ;
She only saw, with wonder as *he* spoke
How much his frame some mighty passion shook !
His eye, which erst on her had ever smiled,
Now glared around in flashes brightly wild.
" All this is fearful, Harold, that you tell "—
First broke the pause, and uttered Isabel—
" I have no cause to grant, or love, or grace,
To savage Spenser or his ruthless race !

They've wrought but wrongs, through undeserved hate,
On me and mine ; and yet I mourn the fate
Of that old man. But say, if say ye will,
What schemes of vengeance doth the bosom fill
Of thy dread chief ? You say, in honour's spite,
Yon faithful town must be assailed to-night !
I marked that you with horror, Harold, shook,
As now of Bristol's savage scene you spoke ;
And as ye spake, I noted much thy brow,
Which, or of hate, or grief, I scarcely know
Beclouded most ;—but true it is thine eye
I ne'er saw flash as yet so angrily ;
And as thou feel'st for that which has been done,
Feel *now, again*, and count my love as won.
Let not, oh ! do not let my father die !
His hair is grey, and time has dimmed *his* eye ;
Save him, if save thou can'st, nor have again
An old man's cruel fall to mourn in vain.”
“ You know not what you ask ”—the youth replied—
“ No less than I should stem Fate's rolling tide !
Much would I dare, could but this arm of mine,
Beat back one danger from a kin of thine.
But 'twill not be—destruction's ready hand,
E'en now prepares the devastating brand ;
The brand that will, at midnight's coming hour,
Enwrap in flames each stronghold, gate, and tower
Of yon devoted town. But yet, sweet love,
Fear not—I warned thee here my faith to prove,
If proof were wanting. Stay ! stay thou with me !
Thou, of thy city's spoil, my all shall be ;

Rich in thy love, I'll seek no other prize
Than that rich gem that in thy bosom lies ;
Grant me but this—assure my guerdon won,
And what I *will*, content thee, *shall* be done.”

A painful thought shot through the maiden's brain,
As thus he spoke ; but soon 'twas gone again—
Lost in the rapid tumult of her mind,
Like distant sounds that passeth down the wind.
But he—he marked it and rejoiced to see
That, for the time, he from that thought was free.
“No, no,—when danger hovers o'er his head
Who gave me life”—the maiden firmly said—
“Shall I, *his* child, in selfish safety stay,
When most my care he needeth, far away ?
Nay, shall the meanest of my people there,
Who willing doth his meed of misery share
With all—shall he have now the tale to tell,
That she for whom he suffered—Isabel,
Forgot that she hath power, by prayer, or smile,
His woes, so long protracted, to beguile
Of half their pangs ? My father hath had cause
To hate thy chieftain, Harold, and his laws,
Or ne'er had he, in words so strangely wild,
Cursed thee, the saviour of his only child.
I told him all—told how Wye's amber wave,
But for a stranger youth had been my grave ;
Told how, that since this friendly truce hath been,
It was my wont to sail each balmy e'en
Adown the Wye. I spoke of that sad day,
Or *glad* day, Harold, I would rather say,

If so thou would'st—but sad 'tis like to be,
Since then thou gain'st what I ne'er gained of thee :
And since 'tis so"—she added—"since 'tis so,
I'll hie me back unto yon walls of woe,
There tend the dying in the coming fight,
And try forget this doubly treacherous night."

She ceased to speak, and turned her steps away,
To where her boat beneath the alder lay ;
But ere her foot had reached the moon-lit tide,
The youthful warrior bounded to her side.
"This must not be ! stay Isabel, and hear"—
He eager cried—"Oh, stay, and hear me swear !
I grant, far as I may, what you desire !
This arm from danger shall defend thy sire.
Thus much I can. But thou, love, must not dare
To mingle in the blood-red scenes of war."

"My father"—spoke the maiden—"can defend
Himself, 'gainst foe avowed, or doubtful friend ;
But who shall point where lurking danger lies,
Or warn him 'gainst a midnight's dark surprise,
If stay I here ? Nay, Harold, stay me not ;
Nor speak of that which will not be forgot !
No—for that one, that noble deed of thine,
Keep thou the heart that is no longer mine ;
But for my duty and my filial love,
I go, if break my heart, at once to prove ;
For rather would I fell De Spenser wed,
Than stay from where my every duty led."

A moment more, and Isabel was gone,
And he, with whom she'd spoke, retired—alone.

THE NIGHT ATTACK !

Time, which nought but peaceful hours should bring,
Soon came with midnight on his dusky wing ;
But brought not (as his wont) to minds opprest,
By day's rough cares, his sweetly soothing rest.
No—'neath his mantle, spread the city o'er,
No sleep was found, save that which wakes no more.
Famine, with feeble foot and sapless arm,
Had summoned been, or ere the wild alarm,
From foes forsworn, and thus from doubly foes,
Without the walls had on the welkin rose.
By means unasked, uncared for, and unknown,
De Spenser's planned surprise around had flown,
And wall and watch-tower, battlement and gate,
Were soon in hostile or defensive state !
Enfeebled hands, the aged and the young,
Fresh nerved, unto the ramparts rushed along,
And many a heart that had to hope grown cold,
Again revived, and suddenly grew bold.
E'en Vaga's daughters—beauteous then as now—
(A saying bold, the minstrel doth allow)
E'en they—each daughter and each loving wife—
All lent their aid in that night's fearful strife.

The city's lord, De Bohun, armed in haste,
And, with a warrior's tact, his forces placed ;
None crowding useless—all could quickly see
Where best their efforts might directed be ;
His weaker points he strengthened—posts he manned,
Where first the foes' advances could be scanned ;

Nought left undone that could a chieftain do,
Who had but freedom or a grave in view.

True to their information came the foe,
Wending their way the southern lines below ;
With deep precaution every move they made,
Marching, where march they might, beneath the shade
Of foliage green. But when, perforce the glance
Of Cynthia fell on battle-axe or lance,
It did to those who anxious watched beseech
Like some enchanted, silvery winding stream.
Still on they came, with slow and measured tread,
Like those who wander o'er the buried dead ;
On, on—till suddenly a hundred darts
Stuck quivering in a hundred bleeding hearts !

Affright, a moment, stopped their onward way,
And broke their firm, compact, and bold array !
Wavering they stood, scarce knowing if to fly
Were best, or yield an easy victory
Unto an unseen foe. But in their choice
They were decided by a startling voice ;
A voice that told, and with no "bated breath,"
That *onward* conquest lay, behind them—death !
It was enough—the master-mind had spoke,
And with his voice all other charms had broke ;
Their fears had vanished, and they saw alone
The Mars-like form that rushed to lead them on.

"On ! on !" he cried, "yon city's walls doth hold
A prize all richer far than gem or gold !"
And on they followed, crushing in their way,
The dying forms that 'neath them writhing lay.

Time's heavy hand proclaimed the mid of night,
Unheard amidst the clamour of the fight
That soon ensued :—not seas that sudden rise,
To meet with foaming crest contending skies,
E'er equalled yet, in wild tumultuous roar,
The fearful sounds that woke Wye's peaceful shore.
The 'leagured citizens, on every side
Prepared—forewarned, threw ope their portals wide ;
Rushed forth to meet, and crush by one fell blow
Their sworn, forsworn, and long inveterate foe.
Deeds by the meanest warrior then were done
On either side, which noted, would have won
For each a spot upon the scroll of Fame,
Whereon to stamp his long remembered name.

But he whose falchion, like a gleam of light,
Glanced here and there—a meteor in its flight—
He of the snow-white plume, the gallant Hugh,
From rank to rank with desperation flew !
His beaver up ;—his eyes that glowed beneath,
Seemed as they could have flashed a foe to death !
His voice so cheered, it e'en the dying made
Look up once more, and clutch the broken blade.
“Charge ! advance ! the moon points out the prize,
That stands with open ports before your eyes !
Nought bars our way, save but yon feeble band
Which comes, by famine vanquished, to our hand !
Upon them ! charge ! Gods ! let it not be said,
That men 'fore shadows stood appalled, or fled.”

Oh, had the force of ever-holy right
Lent to his arm her overwhelming might,

The deeds which now gained him a tyrant's name
Would then have won a hero's lasting fame :—
But heavy wrong suppressed, as with a charm,
The vengeful strength that lay within his arm ;
And long ere morn its first faint beams had shed,
One half his force lay in the trenches dead,
And he, himself, (with numbers of his train)
Felt the deep galling of a captive's chain.

He murmured not, nor chid the victor throng
By word or look, that led him back along ;
But rather shunned the gaze on either side,
As one who would his degradation hide
From every eye ; yet ever and anon,
His furtive glance beneath his visor shone,
As something seeking—something, by his mien,
He would have there beheld, himself unseen.

* * * * *

While shouts of joy, with wild tumultuous din,
Arose the late beleagured walls within ;
Without, nought breathed upon the morning air,
Save hopeless oaths or resignation's prayer.
This, too, soon ceased, or heard so faintly low,
As to beseem (as 'twas) life's parting throe.
Just then—as morning, clad in dusky gray,
Rose in the east, to “ ope the gates of day ”—
Just then a female form, with timid tread,
Stept forth amongst the dying and the dead.
Unnoticed, from the city had she stole
Where crowds ran wild in joyous uncontrol.

With hopeless eye, and yet with stealthy haste,
Along the blood-besprinkled lines she paced ;
Turned now aside and listened—then anon
Would go her lone and twilight errand on.
Yet as she went that scene of horrors through,
With panting heart and trembling limbs she flew
To where some fallen form would meet her eye,
In Spenser's or the royal livery.
Her mind with wild contending feelings fraught,
Hoped not to find, alas ! what most she sought ;
For, ever, as strange features met her view,
A prayer of thanks to heaven spontaneous flew.
Yet on she moved, inspecting, sad and lone,
Each human hillock, as she wandered on :
Her heart, though prone to pity, scarcely now,
For others' woes, could one poor sigh allow,
So full it was :—and yet, where'er her tread
Along that banquet scence of carnage led,
Much met her view that, had not deepest fears
Now wrung her soul, and called forth all her cares,
Would down her cheek have drawn a flood of tears.

But fear at length to hope began to yield,
As near the outskirts of the foughthen field
She drew—and saw, where scattered by the way,
The dead from dead in wider distance lay !
She knew that he, for whom she sought in vain,
If he was dead, had in the van been slain ;
For well she knew that he who gallantly
Had plucked her late from out the deepening Wye—
When danger, nay, when even death was near—
! not been laggard, fighting in the rear.

“No, no”—she cried—“thank heaven he is not slain,
He hath escaped, and all my fears are vain ;
My people saved, and *he*—may live to know ”—
She faltered out, with accent sad and low,—
“ May live to learn that one for whom he dared
Death’s levelled dart, his dearest hopes hath marred ;
Hath nipped a laurel as with magic wand,
That grew within the grasping of his hand.
Oh ! will he curse ?—my busy brain be still !
He will not curse, with other means to kill ;
He will *forget*—yes, other scenes may yield
Balm to his wounded love ; and to his shield
The means whereby its polished disc to clear
Free from the tarnished spot that soiled it here.”

She spoke, and wended back her weary way,
Still moving there, to where in distance lay
(As loth e’en yet that field of death to fly)
Some form that seemed to catch her peering eye.
But none lay there, around, or far, or near,
That from her eye drew more than pity’s tear.

With lightened heart, as nearer still she drew,
The southern gate, with lighter step she flew ;
Close drew the mantle o’er her pallid face ;
Stopped now in fear, then hurried on a space ;
Then, deeming watch and ward in revel lost,
The gate she passed, and o’er the bridge she crossed ;
Through the glad crowd she went unchallenged on,
And gained again her fortress-home—unknown.

THE AXE AND THE BLOCK.

How sad it is success should ever frown,
Or triumph's brow be circled with a crown
Of vengeance—dearly purchased though it be
By blows which might have set e'en captives free !
Revenge ! what is it but the deepest scar
Cleft by the after-stroke of sullen war ?

The city now another aspect wore :
Where grief, or joy, had filled her walls before,
Now reddest vengeance freely stalked abroad,
And made or street, or square, her choice abode :
Day after day was heard the people's yell,
As 'neath the axe the common captives fell.

But now, than these, a nobler victim far,
Upon the block his fated neck must bare ;
Must kneel, though proudly, unto those whom he
Had hoped but late to bring on bended knee.
Ah ! fellest blow which direst fate can deal,
To bow to those we recked to us would kneel !
Yet so it was ! the day, the hour had come,
Which brought with it the proud De Spenser's doom.
Bright broke the morn, and brighter grew the day,
That shone, on what beseemed, a pageant gay ;
For high and low were there with gleeful eye,
To see their foe, the fell De Spenser die.
The square of Friars Grey—a goodly space—
Showed early there full many an anxious face ;
For there, in solemn council 'twas decreed,
His vengeful spirit should from earth be freed.

Along the square, upon the western side,
Raised seats were formed, and richly canopied ;
On which, assembled each in full estate,
The late-freed nobles of the city sate.
In robe of gold, of purple, and of green,
In centre sat unhappy England's Queen ;
And hapless most that she upon its throne,
Dear-bought from Gaul, had ever sat thereon.
Her kinsman, Hainault's Count,* and recreant Kent,
Smiled on her right, on joyful vengeance bent ;
Whilst on her left, reclining on his sword,
Stood, gray and bare, the city's much-loved lord ;
But he, though there to see his foeman die,
No vengeful look displayed within his eye.

And beauty, too, was there—the gay, the young,
On tier 'bove tier in living clusters hung ;
Like garlands rich, of choicest flowers combined,
They waved, as fanned by summer's softest wind.
One form that there reclined the Queen beneath,
Did well beseem the *lily* of the wreath :
Her brow so pale, her cheek so wan and thin,
Told of the canker-worm that preyed within.
The shouts for her, that rose both far and near,
Fell all unheeded on her mind's dull ear ;
For well she knew, oh ! *felt* their dreadful price,
Was nothing less than her soul's sacrifice :
For them, she'd gained, unmindful of the cost,
The lasting peace she had so early lost.

* To whose daughter, Phillippa, the young prince, afterwards Edward the Third, was affianced.

Yet, 'midst the misery of her mind, one thought
Oft brightly rose, and with it solace brought ;
It came in fasting, and it came in prayer,
And in her heart found ever welcome there :
It was the thought that he she mourned, by day
And night, as absent, still was far away.
Poor maid ! her heart still clung to that alone,
Which, for her city's good, away she'd thrown ;
She took no interest *there*—scarce understood
The why or wherefore of that scene of blood ;
She only knew, the Queen had bade her come
To triumph o'er their common foeman's doom.

A shout, and still another, long and loud,
Now burst like thunder from the distant crowd !
Caps waved on high ; whilst those who stood around
The scaffold, caught, and echoed back the sound.
“ He comes ! he comes !—oh ! let me view the man,
Whose breath so long hath proved our city's ban ”—
One cried. Another—“ By the cross I'd ask
No greater blessing than yon headsman's task !
My sire's—my brother's souls unshriven cry
(Whose bodies on yon field unburied lie)
Aloud for vengeance—night and day doth call
On me, with voice of flame, to quit their fall !
Stand back !—oh, could I reach him, with one stroke
I'd spare the soiling of yon dainty block ! ”
“ Hush ! neighbour mine ”—another burgher said—
“ 'Twere better far he on the scaffold bled,
Then all shall *see*, and thus add to the blow
A keener pang—disgrace's bitter throe.

Yea—die, I would see him if it could be,
As I have seen my kith and kindred die !
I've seen them all fall famine's grasp beneath,
Stretch forth their hands, and court the stroke of death !
And shall *he* die—at *once*—as die he would,
Unseen by us in secret solitude ?
No ! let a thousand eyes, each like a lance,
Pierce to his soul a vengeful smiling glance."

Thus were the feelings, strong in every breast,
Or openly, or only half expressed ;
Yet still, as on the noble captive passed,
Upon him some their pitying glances cast ;
Some e'en forgot, in gazing on his face,
(On which pale fear, e'en now, had left no trace),
Their late-borne wrongs—the fall of friends, no more ;
The streams of tears—the floods of crimson gore
By him made flow. They saw but only now
A form move by, upon whose youthful brow,
Calm resignation, austere, yet sedate,
As on her throne, with graceful patience sate :
They could not catch, within his dark blue eye,
A glance that told of reckless cruelty ;
Nor did they deem that aught his lips could move
Save words of peace or ever-gentle love.
His neck and bosom, round which waved his hair
Of sunny brightness, otherwise were bare,
And pearly shone, as here and there was seen
A snowy space, his flowing locks between.
His brow, as though 't had never known an ill,
Was held aloft in proud disdaining still,

As on he moved with calm and fearless air,
Less like a victim than a victor there ;
Block, axe, and headsman, as he drew them near,
Wrung not from him an outward mark of fear.

Yet, something now that met his wandering eye,
Drew from his breast an almost stifling sigh ;
Bent down his head as though a blight had come,
And withered up his strength, his youth and bloom :
He made an effort, though a bootless one,
To be himself, but all his strength had flown,
And onward to the stage he thus was led,
With down-bent brow, and slow uneven tread.
The change was marked, and "Lo !" the Queen exclaimed,
"Yon shining axe our wildest foe hath tamed
At very view. See, lords, the caitiff wight,
That lately battled 'gainst our holy right ;
That dared to plant his rebel foot between
His king, his prince, and us his rightful queen :
'Fore whom our nobles, like the common herd,
Fell, or by axe, or soul-debasing cord.
When backed by thousands, war equipped and free,
Restrainless, lawless, who so brave as he ?
Our laws *his* will—*our* wills at his command,
Must bend, forsooth, at waving of his hand.
But wills, lords, will be free, when men unto
Themselves shall dare be loyal, leal, and true ;
Ye've proved it, knights, and brought its truth to bear
Fell on yon head that now stands drooping there."

She pointed (darting at the time a glance
That spoke the shameless, fell, "she-wolf of France,")

To him how now with patient calmness stood
Beside the block that thirsted for his blood.

'Twas strange that he, who but a moment past
On scorning crowds could looks indifferent cast,
Should now so suddenly hang down the head,
To veil the eyes which not a tear-drop shed !
Yet so it was ;—nor axe, nor headsman grim,
Nor holy monk could gain a glance from him.
But when the queen's high, taunting voice was heard,
It harshly struck, within his soul, a chord
That spoke of passion, and drew instantly
A flash of hatred from his lifted eye.

That eye was seen, though quickly 'twas withdrawn,
By one it had beamed looks of love upon ;
By one who hoped, yet feared, that it had cast
On her, its look of hate or love the last ;
And as she saw it, knew it but too well—
With one wild shriek down from the dais fell !
All was dismay—the Earl, with aspect wild,
Rushed from his seat and flew to raise his child ;
Whilst quick a sympathetic feeling through
Th' assembled crowd on pity's pinions flew.
But 'twas for her they pity felt alone !
With him, above, the work of death went on.

The aged Earl, with consternation wild,
Beat back the throng, and raised his stricken child ;
Parted, with trembling hand and anxious care,
From off her brow her bright dishevelled hair.
“Look up, my child”—he cried—“oh, speak and tell
What thus hath moved my sweetest Isabel ?”

A faint drawn sigh her heart—*his* heart—relieved,
And told him that as yet, she breathed—she lived ;
That he not childless was. Her sunken eye
Half opened next ; and whilst she vacantly
Gazed round, like one from slumber slowly 'woke,
Her pale lips parted, and she faintly spoke.
“ It was a dream—oh yes, it could not be ”—
She muttered forth—“ a dread reality !
It were too much that *he*—oh, my dread lord !
My father !—tell me—tell me in a word—
Whom saw I there ?—I dare not look—but oh !
My waking mind—speak not ! I must not know ;
Or I ”—but ere more words her lips had passed,
Now struck upon her ear the trumpet's blast,
The sound of which, as quick it came again,
Cleft, as it seemed, in two, her throbbing brain.
Bewildered—faint, she could but fix her eye
Upon the Earl's pale face inquiringly ;
And he, than her, bewildered scarcely less,
Could only wonder at his child's distress.

And whilst they stood, almost bereft of power,
Now deeply boomed from out the neighbouring tower,
In strain that round with startling echoes fell,
The strong-toned, heavy, death-announcing bell ;
And, simultaneous with its swelling note,
Abruptly rose upon the air a shout
Of seeming savage glee—then shrieks and cries
Which women utter when they sympathise
With aught that human is, when suffering
The punishment that even crime may bring.

To this succeeded silence—for had fell,
At sound of trumpet and at knoll of bell,
The fatal axe that—severing at one stroke
De Spenser's neck—had sunk deep in the block.
The headsman, smiling, strode along the floor ;
Plucked up the head, becrimsoned now with gore,
And, holding it aloft, " behold !" he said,
" Behold ! a rebel and a traitor's head !"

At that dread voice, the scarcely breathing maid,
On whose crushed heart death's icy hand was laid,
Looked slowly round ; and—though so brightly clear
The mid-day sun showed objects far and near—
The waving crowd—the noble and the mean,
The humble burgher and the haughty queen ;
Kent's brightening brow and Hainault's flashing eye—
All, all her wandering gaze passed slowly by.
She saw but there with eyesight's parting thread,
That bright-hair'd, fair-brow'd, still lov'd, trunkless head ;
She saw but that, and that, alas ! not long,
For sight failed with the view, although her tongue
Uttered the name of—" Harold "—as relief
In death she found, for but death-ending grief.

POETICAL LETTER,

Inscribed to SERGEANT BENJAMIN EVANS, *1st Battalion*
Scots Fusilier Guards, No. 3320, Crimea.

"O! that estates, degrees, and offices,
Were not derived corruptly; that clear honour
Were purchased by the merits of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare;
How many be commanded that command."—*Shakspeare.*

DEAR FRIEND,—I send you here a few rough rhymes,
On the wide wings of our impartial "*Times.*"

This is, it seems, "the soldier's war," dear Ben,
In which mere beardless boys have fought like men!
Some live to wear their laurels—others have
Them blooming green around their honoured grave;
Watered, 'tis true, as they will be for years,
By parents', widows', and young orphans' tears;
And hallowed also have their memories been,
By grateful people, and by gracious Queen;
For such are tributes never yet denied
To those who bravely lived or nobly died.

But you, dear friend, it glads me much to find,
Are whole in body still, and brave in mind ;
Undaunted by the dangers of that land,
Where carnage and disease stalk hand in hand !
Pale famine, too—a sad, a sickening foe—
Has failed to find thy brave heart sinking low !
No ! high it beats, as throbbed it in the fight
So nobly won on gory Alma's height !
And e'en as there thy bold career began,
Sustained thee through unequal Inkermann—
Unequal inasmuch as 't has been shewn,
The brutal foe full twenty were to one.

What is this thing—this moving-spring of war ?
Is it a human being—this dreadful Czar ?
Has it a heart—a soul that it would save,
From torments 'yond the unambitious grave ?
Oh ! say it is not human—nor disgrace,
By blot so foul, the whole wide human race !
E'en savage beasts that prowl the wilds for prey—
The slimy snake that winds its deadly way,
Or eagle keen, that doth instinctive seek,
In “prey obscene” to flesh its fatal beak—
Each—bird or beast, or reptile fell—can find,
Howe'er distressed, some mercy for its kind !
But this dread Czar no touch of pity knows—
Friends, unoffending, are struck down as foes ;
Homes are made hearthless—devastation's brand
Is hurled alike on friend or foeman's land.
Gaunt famine, too, prompt at his bidding, roams
Where should be peace and plenty's tranquil homes ;

Whilst pestilence, with pale, sad visage there,
Taints with her foetid breath the wholesome air !
E'en thus with friends—if friendship claim he can,
Who is a foe to the whole wide race of man !
What are to him the orphan's wailing cry,
The parent's moan, or widow's tearful eye ?
What cares he that the gory grave divide
The youthful bridegroom and the mourning bride ?
Friends may sit pale, in aspect sad and lorn,
And weep for bonds by this dread Moloch torn.
Oh, man of granite heart ! if heart thou hast—
A thing that may be found in wildest beast—
What would'st thou more ? what further would'st thou
have ?

Shall nations to thy footstool crawl, and crave
That thou would'st deign *they reap* what *they* have *sown*,
And eat of gardens fruitful—and *their own* ?
No ! Freedom—ever hated, Czar, by thee—
Shouts with indignant voice o'er land and sea !
And at her bidding hosts of heroes rise,
Whose answering shouts re-echo from the skies ;
And whose strong arms the force of *right* will brace,
To hurl thee, tyrant, from thy "pride of place."
Does no "small voice" e'er whisper in thine ear
Deeds, hell-born, wrought, Czar, in thy mad career ?
Ne'er speak of Poland, crushed beneath thine heel,
Afraid of pangs to breathe she sure must feel !
Canst clean the stain left by the slaughtered Huns ?
Or wash thy "knout" from blood of peaceful nuns ?

Wilt still work out ambition's iron rule,
At worst a tyrant, and at best a fool ?
Aye, *fool* ! for what save folly prompts thee, Czar,
To wage a wrongful and a hopeless war ?
To plunge thyself thus in a crimson flood,
And wade thy way to hell through seas of blood ?

'Tis such as you, brave Ben, should soldiers be ;
" Friends of the brave, and guardians of the free ;"
Whose breasts are bulwarks, steady to oppose
The headlong rush of base aggressing foes !
No ! foes abroad, or near our native home,
Past such as you shall never dare to come.
Behind where British hearts in phalanx stand,
Sweet Peace may wander o'er our " happy land,"
Spreading around her, as she onward goes,
Those *lasting* joys a Briton only knows !
Our cottage-kings—the tillers of our soil—
May fearless rest when weary with their toil !
Wealth may increase, and commerce flourish yet,
Secure behind the British bayonet !
Beauty may sleep, and all her tempting charms
Unruffled be by midnight's wild alarms.

We all are born—we live, and hope to thrive ;
And, as we older grow, hope still to live ;
We cling to life, and, sighing, dread the hour
When sickness' cloud *at home* may o'er us lower—
Avoiding always, with fastidious care,
The genial rain, or draughts of cooling air !
Not so with him ! our warrior must obey
When " duty calls," or " honour points the way !"

To him, and to his comrades, all are one,
The nipping north, or blist'ring torrid zone !
The parching plains—the deadly jungle bush,
Or rolling floods, where whelming torrents rush !
With purpose firm, undaunted on they go
To where, perchance, may lurk a faithless foe ;
And oft opposed to foulest treachery,
Rush on their fate—whatever that may be.

Oh ! may the God of battles grant thee come
To greet again admiring friends at home !
And, ah ! how doubly welcome, could'st thou bring,
To aching hearts, some “ healing on thy wing !”
But 'twill not be ! thou canst, alas ! but tell
How comrades fought—how gloriously they fell ;
Fell in the battle, rushing hotly on
To where bold deeds of daring may be done !
Or, writhing 'neath pale sickness' sad decree,
Met with Fate's fiat *scarce less gloriously !*
For brave were they, who thus their life did yield,
E'en whilst their hearts were on the battle field.

The above appeared originally in the *Hereford Times*, a copy of which was forwarded to the Crimea, but unfortunately failed to reach my brave old friend. He is now, I am happy to know, after having “ done the state good service,” taking his rest as “ mine host ” of the *Rose and Crown*, Hart Street, Grosvenor Square, London.

SONGS, BALLADS, &c.

BALLAD—SCORNFUL MARY.

I met her first when spring was young,
And flowers were gently waking ;
The birds were, with a joyful song,
Dull winter's silence breaking !
Fair Luga crept her winding way
'Neath garlands girt with scented May—
Ah ! I shall ne'er forget the day
That set my heart a-aching.

Yet was the day most fair to view,
No cloud the sky o'ershading ;
All, all above was brightly blue,
Below no flower was fading !
But one sweet bud within my breast,
Bloomed fairer far than all the rest
That met my gaze or east, or west,
Yet was my peace invading.

That bud was love—that e'er of woe,
Or endless bliss is shedding,
As from its doubtful blossoms flow
Despair, or hope wide spreading !
But woe was mine ! for on that morn
Sweet peace was from my bosom torn ;
For Mary with an eye of scorn
Looked down whilst I was pleading.

Ah ! why will lovely woman frown
When love she is up-waking ?
Why crush life's brightest blossom down ?
Its tender branches breaking !
For love, wherever true it dwells,
All other earthly flower excels ;
But crush it, and, like mine, it swells
The heart to deadly aching.

SONG—MY LOVE LAID LOW.

Oh ! scarce a year has passed away
Since I was gayest of the gay,
With not a care beyond to-day ;
Unless it were, when morrow came,
My Edwin would prove still the same
To me :—
My Edwin still would prove the same.

With him I then roamed Dinedor's brow—
The same sweet Dinedor then as now,
All decked in green, turf, bush, and bough !
 But bough, and bush, and leafy tree,
 Alas ! are nothing now to me,
 To me, &c.

Yet still I sometimes wander there,
But not when days are bright and fair,
Nor in the merry dance to share !
 But 'neath its darkest shades, alone,
 In deep despair I wander on !
 Alone, &c.

Yet think not, maidens, thus I rove
So sad, that false to me did prove
The object of my early love !
 Ah ! maidens, ne'er may prove to you,
 Than Edwin's was, a love less true !
 Less true, &c.

But death, that hope alone can chill ;
Fell death, that love alone can kill,
That bids the throbbing heart be still,
 Has struck on us the fatal blow,
 That makes me weep my love laid low !
 Laid low, &c.

SONG—WHY WERE LASSES MADE, BOYS ?

Each mortal man, soon as he can,
 (And trust me it is true, boys,)
Just earn of pelf enough for self,
 Will find it do for two, boys !
So try it, lads—just try it on,
 And do not be afraid, boys ;
Lads were not meant to live alone,
 Or why were lasses made, boys ?

Where is the elf but loves himself,
 And loves this world's good cheer, boys ?
Its bread and beef, amongst its chief,
 Its cider and its beer, boys ?
But meat and drink for only one
 Should not on cloth be laid, boys ;
Lads were not meant to eat alone,
 Or why were lasses made, boys ?

We love the spring, that roses bring ;
 We love the summer through, boys ;
And autumn's fruits our palates suit,
 Its vegetables, too, boys !
But folly 'twere in any one
 To think Dame Nature spread, boys,
Her yearly feast for lads alone,
 Or why were lasses made, boys ?

The winter nights will yield delights,
Oh, yes ! when Christmas comes, boys ;
The dance and song will all night long
Cheer up for us our homes, boys !
But dull would sound the viol's tone
Where females did not tread, boys ;
Lads were not meant to dance alone,
Or why were lasses made, boys ?

The sun so gay was made for day,
The moon was made for night, boys ;
And lasses here were sent to share
With lads this world's delight, boys !
For folly 'twere, in any one,
To think Dame Nature spread, boys,
The earth with sweets, for lads alone,
Or why were lasses made boys ?

VALENTINE—I WILL BE TRUE TO THEE.

I have not words to woo thee, Jane,
I have not words to woo !
I cannot, will not, sue thee, Jane,
As gayer lovers do !
I may not *call* thee angel, dear,
Yet, if this earth upon,
There should be angels dwelling, dear,
I *feel* that thou art one.

I do not kneel, love, at thy feet,
As gayer lovers may,
For I have ever deemed it meet,
To *stand* to what I say !
Yet am I willing—ready, dear,
My life-long faith to seal,
By kneeling with thee, dearest, there,
Where man should only kneel.

I do not swear those eyes of thine
Beam like a flood of light,
Nor that in lustre they outshine
The clearest star of night !
Yet, better oath, Jane, will I swear,
(Not truer it may be)
But, be or weal or woe my fare,
I will be true to thee.

SONG—DAYS THAT ARE GONE.

Oh ! the days that are gone, never more to return,
My grief to assuage, or to hush one sad sigh ;
Though I weep for friends dead, or for living loves mourn,
Till the depth of woe's fountain itself shall be dry !
In vain may my gaze on the future be cast ;
If friendless thereto I must creep all alone,
A tear will intrude for the scenes that are past,
And hide every view but of days that are gone.

Oh! the days that are gone—with the hopes of life's morn,
Which fluttered on wings all so buoyant and free!
Hope's pinions by envy long time have been shorn,
And faded are joys I had pictured to me!
Yet my hopes were not wild, nor my joys brightly gay,
As I saw but friends smile in the dream that is done;
I wished for no more but to please for to-day
The friends I had loved in the days that are gone.

BALLAD—WEDDED LOVE.

*Subscribed to my much-respected friend, MR. FRANKLIN
LEWIS, Grove Street, Camden Town, London.*

Oh, think not hope for ever gone,
Though cares unnumbered press thee low,
If thou hast yet one hand alone
Will softly soothe thy aching brow!
And sweeter still, if on the breast
Of wedded love thy brow be laid;
For there is found the fairest rest
That e'er for man on earth was made!
Yes, hope's bright star will ever shine,
Whilst faithful woman's love be thine.

Or should hope, like a meteor, fly,
Far lighting up before thy gaze
A brightly ever-beaming sky,
And gild thy world with radiant rays—

Oh ! who may best its blaze subdue,
And mellow down its ardent glare,
Save her, who willing would with you
Joy's light, or woe's sad darkness, share !
Yes, hope's bright star will ever shine,
Whilst faithful woman's love be thine.

BALLAD—"WHEN THE SUN WENT DOWN."

Oh ! where is the sunlight ? and oh ! where is the day ?
In darkness I wander from my path far away !
A cloud has come o'er me, and my heart, sad and low,
Seems a chosen abode for the demon of woe !
Yet joy lately dwelt there—ah ! the spring has scarce gone
Since the light of a smile beamed me graciously on !
That smile was my Harry's, whom I ne'er yet saw frown,
E'en when he said he'd meet me, & lovingly would greet me,
When the sun went down.

He said that he would meet me, and his smile, as of old,
Seemed as bright as the morning when the clouds are
up-rolled !
His voice never faltered, but so manly and clear
It thrilled through my bosom as it fell on my ear—
"As the night-star appears, love, so truly will I
Wait for thy coming on the banks of gentle Wye ;
And away in the meadows, far away from the town,
I will wait to meet thee, and lovingly will greet thee,
When the sun goes down."

Oh ! such were his words on the morn when last we met,
And the world I would give if those words I could forget,
But they still are a-ringing in a tone sadly dear,
Let me roam far away, or the gentle Vaga near !
I hear them at morning, I hear them at noon,
And at night when I wander beneath the darksome moon ;
For the sun and the moon both alike on me frown,
Since my Harry said he'd meet me, and lovingly would
greet me,

When the sun went down.

The sun went down, and the young May-moon rose high,
Yet still I waited for him where sweet Vaga murmured by !
I saw the night's true star shine as bright as love should be,
But its smiling seemed a mockery and a sadness unto me ;
For my eyes were a-weary, and my heart low and lone,
Seemed to hunger in my bosom for a hope that was gone ;
That was lost in the meadows, far away from the town,
For Harry failed to meet me—oh ! he never came to greet me
When the sun went down.

VALENTINE.

You ask me to show thee how best I may prove
The truth of my often-told tale !
Look, love, on yon cottage, down by the green grove,
That you say lends a charm to the vale !
That cot, dear, is mine (with its garden so neat) ;
From the strength of my arm has it come ;
It wants but a mistress to make it complete,
To render it truly a home.

For *home*, without woman, sweet girl, is not there,—
Though palace or cot it may be ;
And my pretty dwelling, unless it you share,
Will ne'er seem a home, dear, to me.
Then let not my labour of love be in vain,
I've toiled in love's hopes and its fears,
With the will that I feel I shall ne'er toil again,
If you now blight the hope of long years.

I would for thy sake I'd more wealth to impart,
But love wields a powerful charm ;
And the honest affection that lives in my heart,
It is that gives strength to my arm.
I am poor, dear, in words—but in deeds rich I'll prove,
(Which I hold to be far better still) ;
For deep in my breast lies the might of my love,
In my arm bides the strength of my will.

Nought else can I promise—though more may I do,
If with thee what I say will prevail ;
And, as yet, 'tis the best proof I can show to you
Of the truth of my often-told tale !
And you, you believe me ? oh ! say that 'tis so,
And claim all I have, love, as thine ;
Nor fear, but till death, dear, in weal or in woe,
I'll prove thy own true Valentine.

A HUSBAND'S VALENTINE.

"She's all my fancy painted her!"

Fifteen springs have passed away, dear,
And their buds have bloomed and died,
Since the glad-remembered day, dear,
When I pressed thee as my bride.
Nature's flowers, with all their beauty—
Crimson cup or deep blue bell—
All perform a briefer duty
Than with thee I've found to dwell :

They, by sunbeams warmly nourished,
Shed but for a day their bloom ;
But thou hast years 'midst care-clouds flourished,
The pride-bloom of my humble home :
And though thou hast with love-buds gladdened
This, erewhile, lone heart of mine,
Yet care withal, dear, hath not saddened
With a frown that brow of thine.

Still fair thy form too :—footstep springing—
Eyes that yet beam genial rays !
All, all are, dearest, constant bringing
Thoughts back of my wooing days.
I would not change thee (were I 'portuned),
E'en could a change effected be,
For a maid more freely fortun'd,
Who lacked the gifts I've found in thee.

I found thee young ; I wooed thee truly ;
 Played a faithful lover's part !
You saw it, dear, and gave me duly,
 All thou had'st—a virgin heart !
'Twas all I sought—and that obtaining,
 Since ever have I strove to prove,
The worth of such a treasure gaining
 Is, at the least, wife—love for love.

And Time, whose foot-prints deeper trace, dear,
 As the further on he flies,
Will, as thy charms he doth efface, dear,
 Likewise dim thy husband's eyes ;
So shall I not his marks discover,
 Shall not e'en see my *sun* decline,
But to the last remain thy lover,
 Thy wedded, life-long Valentine.

BY WHERE WYE'S SWEET WATERS PLAY.

SONG OF THE FORSAKEN.

By where Wye's sweet waters play
Oft I, morn and evening, stray ;
Oft I, to myself unknown,
Find I'm wandering there alone ;
Pacing now with absent mind ;
Seeking that I fail to find,
Then wake and wonder why I stray
By where Wye's sweet waters play.

I do not gaze on spangled mead,
Nor do I glance where, over head,
Wave as—oh, wave lover's vows !
Here and there—inconstant boughs.
Ah ! emblem true, or wherefore I,
Thus at morn and evening sigh ;
Or, *alone*, why do I stray
By where Wye's sweet waters play ?

Once I deemed that—oh the day !—
Vows of love passed not away ;
That seals they were to life-long faith,
And broken never but by death !
But woe is mine,—for daily grief
Hath broken up my fond belief,
And doomed me thus alone to stray
By where Wye's sweet waters play.

SONG—LOVE AND HOPE

We loved, dear, when our youthful days
Were clouded o'er with sorrow,
And could but hope that brighter rays
Would greet us on the morrow ;
And, in that hope, we lived and loved,
Each other's burden bearing,
A load that all the lighter proved
As both were equal sharing.

Long years had passed—life's mid-day came,
And yet no sunshine bringing,
But still I found thee e'er the same—
To love and bright hope clinging !
Yes—still we loved, although our days
Were clouded o'er with sorrow,
And still we hoped that brighter rays
Would greet us on the morrow.

Ah ! many morrows, dark and drear,
And many cares have come, love,
But yet despair has not come near
Our little humble home, love !
For still we love, although our days
Are clouded o'er with sorrow,
And hope we yet that brighter days
May shine on us to-morrow.

SONG—TILL THEE I SAW.

A wild waste did this world appear,
Till thee I saw, my Mary dear !
Then toiled I but that work would give
Me, day by day, the means to live !
Oh ! weak are words, and vain to prove
The influence of a maiden's love !

Then do not fear,
But I will bear a world of care,
When I am thine, and thou art mine,
My Mary, dear.

Till thee I saw, no hopes were mine !
I heeded not the sun's decline,
Save that to me it brought awhile
A respite from a day of toil ;
Nor cared I when its first faint ray
Again proclaimed another day
 Was breaking clear.
I then could bear no thought of care !
My heart was free till I saw thee,
 My Mary, dear.

Till thee I saw, I was, in sooth,
In age a man, in thought a youth !
I never dreamt that I could prove
The happy man a maid may love !
But oh ! the magic of thy smile
Has taught how sweet will be my toil
 When thou art near.
Yes, I will bear a world of care,
When I am thine, and thou art mine,
 My Mary, dear.

BALLAD—SONS OF SONG.

While some may choose the rugged road
 Of War's wild way,
Or others seek to bear the load
 Of Fortune's sway,
Give me the in-born bliss to find
The ready solace to the mind,
That springs, despite of grief or care,
Like larks that mount in morning's air
 The skies among !
Oh, let me roam, in fancy's home,
 A child of song !

If free my wings, I'd soar above
 The world's cold frown,
And, roving where I'd list to rove,
 To none bow down !
I'd beg no boon the great could give,
Nor on false hopes be doomed to live ;
And so should 'scape from day to day,
The galling griefs I drag away
 In chains along !
Oh, yes, I'd roam, in fancy's home,
 A child of song !

Or should misfortune press me down
 In dungeon low,
I'd bear without a sigh or frown
 Her fellest blow !

Yes, even there I would engage
To make my gaol a golden cage,
In which I'd tune my lyre and sing,
While mounting high on fancy's wing,
Her realms among !
Oh, yes, I'd roam, in fancy's home,
A child of song !

Yet, ah ! 'tis hard that those who sing
The sad to cheer,
Should ever bide, with crippled wing,
A dungeon near ;
Should sadly sing until they die,
Or live on crumbs of charity ;
Crumbs stinted out with scanty dole,
By those who through the world may roll
In wealth along !
Who stay to hear, but seldom cheer,
The sons of song.



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

GROSMONT CASTLE.

A FRAGMENT OF ROMAUNT.

With blood besprinkled, from the field of fight,
 The Squire a-wearied to the castel came,
 And entraunce gained he, though 'twas near to night,
 For there a-waitinge, sate an anxious dame.
 That morn had seen the Ladie with her Lord,
 Him up e'en unto cruel honour yield;
 Had heard him speke the tim'rous farewell word,
 Ere hurried he unto the battel field!
 He kissed his hand and bowed his head,
 As 'neath her lattice proud he said—
 "The laurels, love, to-day I gain,
 Shall thine be when I come agen;
 And they shall form a wreath, I vow
 Our Ladie by, to deck thy brow!
 Or, if in fight I fall me, love,
 My trusty Squire shall bring thy glove,
 Which here I wear me next my heart,
 And which with life I will but part!
 Yet fear thee not but I shall come
 To-night a crowned victour home"—
 He said, then rode him out of sight,
 To mingle in the bloody fight.

"What news," the Ladie cried, "thou trusty Squire ?
Say, speeds thy Lord and mine, thy master, well ?
Why dost thou give me time-space to inquire
Of thee the news thou wert home sped to tell ?
Hath plucked my Knight from flying foeman's brow
The laurels that to-night with me he'll share ?
Hath vanquished he the traytours, even now ?
Quick ! tell me, will my sweet Lord soon be here ?"
"Fair falls the day," the Squire he said,
As low he bowed his capless head ;
"Fair falls the day, and my liege Lord
Hath stained with recreaunt blood his sword !
But yet the battel is not done,
Nor chaplette grene of conquest won !
But my loved Lord, and, Ladie, thine,
Doth like a war-star brightly shine ;
Hath made the foemen for to yield,
And now doth chase them from the field.
But here in haste he bid me ride,
To tell how 't doth with him betide.
So joy thee, Ladie, and farewell !
Assure thee now thy Lord is well."
And so forthwith he went his way
At saying qwhat he had to say.

Dark grew, and sore tempestuous was the night !
Yet all in summer gear the Dame yclad
Herself ; and did with many a gem bedight
Her form, that nothing 'bout her might seem sad !

Nought left she bare, all saving that her brow
 She, for the promised chaplette, deckless held ;
 But her fair breast, like wakinge wave I trow,
 With painful throes of expectation swelled.
 No words she spake, but paced the floor,
 Her eyne oft castinge to the door ;
 And her dark ringletts fro' her ear
 She threw to catch qwhat sounds drew near.
 She listened long—at length was there
 A footstep heard upon the stair !
 All else was silent—for without
 She heard of welcominge no shout ;
 No glad acclaim to tell was come
 A laureled victour to his home ;
 No loud huzza, nor clang of arms,
 Did mingle with the midnight storms.

Withouten power to speak, or go
 One step her chambre door unto—
 So dolorous did the silence prove,
 That nought she thought of save her glove !
 She nothing saw—forgot the wreath,
 And weened her Lord lay cold in death ;
 And, as wide open flew the door,
 Down fell she swooninge on the floor.

* * * *

“ Where am I ? Where ? ” the Ladie said,
 As lift she up her 'wilderer head.
 “ Ah me ! what face—what form is here,
 That with such warmth dothe press me near ?
 Oh ! was to me the bliss ygiven
 To die and join *thee* here in heaven ? ”

"Thou hast not, dearling, hast not died !"
With tendre joy her Lord he cried ;
"Thou art with me, love, here on earth,
Who long hope here to prove thy worth ;
And shall at last be ever blest,
If I so happy be as rest
With thee, for evermore above,
In bands of everlastinge love !
I fast have rid to lay me, sweet,
The promised chaplette at thy feet."

WHIP-POOR-WILL.

The fire-flies wing from brake to bush,
The zephyrs play the pines among,
And as the day its voices hush
The night-birds raise their varied song ;
But none, in accents dull or clear,
Or sweetly low, or gaily shrill,
Can sooth my woe, or charm mine ear,
Save but the cry of Whip-poor-Will.

The eve I do remember well,
When Yarro from my wigwam wooed
Me meet him down in yonder dell,
And how with tender voice he sued.
With list'ning ear I caught each word,
I felt his voice—I feel it still,
Whene'er thy notes, dear pensive bird,
Fall on mine ear, sweet Whip-poor-Will.

G

He ask'd my hand—I gave my heart—
I'd nothing more, my brave to give ;
I thought not then that we should part,
That he should die, and I could live.
Yet, on the war-path cold he lies,
And here I mourn him on the hill
Where last we met—and to my sighs
None answer, save sad Whip-poor-Will.

I'd scarcely learnt what 'tis to love—
What 'tis first love returned to feel—
Ere I alas ! was doomed to prove
The grief that death alone can heal.
I'd scarce received the virgin kiss
When in the woods rose loud and shrill,
A sound that broke my cup of bliss,
And hushed the song of Whip-poor-Will.

It was the foe-tribe's hostile cry,
And which my Yarro smiled to hear ;
Oh ! he forgot that I was nigh,
Heard not my sigh, saw not my tear.
“ Farewell awhile,” at length he cried,
And lightly bounded down the hill,
“ Till I return, my heart-wed bride,
Remember me and Whip-poor-Will.”

Oh, sad that peace than ruthless war
In manly hearts less strong should prove ;

Why from their wigwams lead them far
From joyful scenes of lasting love ?
Ah ! were it not so I should here
Life's sweetest duties now fulfil ;
Should smile my chase-worn chief to cheer,
And shun thy cry, sad Whip-poor-Will.

YAOLA, OR THE TWO ROSES.

AN INDIAN SKETCH.

How blest were my days and how peaceful my nights,
E'er near my wild wigwam the white man appeared !
The chase of the moose-deer then yielded delights,
In which my now lost love, poor Yaola, shared.
At eve, when the sun had gone down in the west,
And the chase for the day had been brought to a close,
My cares I forgot as I clasped to my breast
The maid who so loved me—my sweet red rose.

And her love I returned ; for of all the red maids,
Of mine own, or of neighbouring tribes, I e'er saw,
Not one had I met, 'neath our wide forest shades,
Save her, could I take to my mat as my squaw !
But I had two tongues when I thought I'd but one ;
In my breast, too, two hearts did their throbbing disclose,
When first near yon pine-grove I met all alone
The pale man's proud daughter—the cold white rose.

But she shunned me—Manitto ! Oh, had we ne'er met ;
Ah, had she ne'er come o'er the big rolling stream,
The sun of my days then all bright would have set,
And death would have woke me, as from a sweet dream !
But dark are my days, and my nights are all light,
For in neither my mind finds or peace or repose ;
By day I am blind to what once was so bright,
And at night I behold but—the cold white rose.

Yaola, poor maiden, could not fail to see
That to death, but to death, would she e'er be a bride ;
And, like a struck deer, she came sobbing to me,
And with voice like the setting storm sadly she cried—
“ Shall I tell her thy love ? shall I plead for our peace ?
I've nothing to hope, but to finish our woes ;
My life and thy troubles together will cease
When we gain thee the smiles of the cold white rose.

“ 'Tis true I had dared on the future to cast
My eyes, and had gazed on a beautiful scene !
I saw thee and me, each our first love and last ;
E'en each unto each as my parents had been !
I saw in our young, too, ourselves again young ;
Saw our boys brave like thee, and our girls, too, disclose
The beauty that oft I have heard from thy tongue
Described as possessed by—thy poor red rose.

“But woke am I rudely ! I scarcely e’en now
Know what I am speaking ; should not so have said,
For the words I have uttered would over my brow
(Did I love for my sake) cast shame’s deepest shade ;
But myself I forget as I gaze on thy grief ;
And will try to forget what I once did suppose,—
That I should be worn on the breast of my chief,
And bloom there for life as his only loved rose.

“Yet I’ll go plead thy peace ! By Manitto I swear !
That from childhood till now I have sought but thy weal ;
Like the mother-bird, then I’ll my bosom lay bare,
And smile at the deep wound that death will but heal.
Then cheer thee, my chief ! Oh, again do thou prove
(E’er from this sad dream I awake to repose)
That the brave I adored was all-worthy the love
That died but when withered—thy poor red rose.”

Ah ! green has the grass grown above the cold clay
That wraps from my gaze the once light of mine eye !
The winter’s rude storm and the summer’s fierce ray,
Since Yaola’s sad death, pass me heedlessly by !
And she of the cold heart—the pale rose—has gone
Again to the land where the big water flows ;
And I, of the two tongues, on the thorns live alone,
That e’er should be his, who dares blight his true rose.

THE INDIAN LOVER.

Low wanes the clouded moon,—the panthers prowl,
The ravenous wolves in deafening discord howl ;
The ruthless cougar and the savage bear
Each now leaves stealthily its gloomy lair ;
And o'er the prairie sweeps the hollow wind,
Leaving a deep and wavy track behind :
But I feel not the piercing blast, nor fear
The savage wolves, the panther, nor the bear—
 As, sailing in my bark canoe,
 I go to meet my sweet Yahoo.

Behind the mountains, now, the moon has gone,
Yet still have I a guide will lead me on ;
On, on, unerring, till I gain the tree
'Neath which my Yahoo patient waits for me.
Though wrapt in darkness comes the rattling storm,
I've that will shield me free from ev'ry harm ;
Will open to me, bright as brightest day,
Through yonder lakelet clear and straight the way—
 'Tis love, sweet love, will guide me through
 The darkness to my sweet Yahoo.

They told to me that foe-tribes had to-day,
With savage whoop of war, passed on this way ;
The direful yell of vengeance on their tongues—
Shouting revenge for real or fancied wrongs.

Ah ! fancy wrongs they must, I know, who would
Try wash out shadows with my Yahoo's blood ;
For never, never, in the substance, yet,
Have man, or child, a wilful wrong e'er met ;
 Have never found a willing foe
 In my sweet love—my dear Yahoo.

Soft ! here I now must quit my light canoe,
On foot to thread the winding forest through :
And lo ! here stands the ever-welcome tree
'Neath which my Yahoo nightly waits for me ;
Yea, waits—e'en waits me now—is lying here !
Hist, Yahoo ! speak love, art thou sleeping, dear ?
Blood ! dead !—ah, no—sure, no ! thou dost but feign,
To laugh, anon, my groundless fears as vain !
 She heeds me not,—oh, hour of woe,
 That robbed me of my sweet Yahoo !

Where, where are now my happy hopes—my fears ?
Where are the wolves, the panthers, or the bears ?
Where now the beating rain ?—where, lightnings fly ?
All—all have passed thy beauties, dearest, by :
Aye, brutes untamed, and raging tempests can,
Less savage be than ruthless, vengeful man.
Manitto, hear !—oh, thou Great Spirit, hear,
While I, loud as thy rolling thunder, swear
 That food shall ne'er my lips pass through,
 Till I avenge my dead Yahoo !

ALLAH! HU!

TURKISH WAR CRY.

"Allah! Hu! is properly the war-cry of the Mussulmans, and they dwell long on the last syllable, which gives it a very wild and peculiar effect."—BYRON.

Gather, Moslems, in your might,
Crowd the Crescent-standard round!
Come, and in the sacred fight
Let no coward heart be found.
War we not for gold or gain,
Strike we but for liberty;
Fight, that we may still remain,
As of old—a nation free!
Gather, Moslems, brave and true;
Die or conquer!—Allah! Hu!

Onward march, from far and wide!
Stay not for the foe's attack;
But with rush of ocean's tide,
Drive the base enslavers back.
Shall we, Moslems, free and brave,
Tamely see the tyrant pour
Bands of mingled serf and slave
'Gainst our mosque or harem door?
Die first, Moslems, brave and true;
Die or conquer!—Allah! Hu!

Lo, where Poland panting lies,
Linked unto the tyrant's chain,
Biding but her time to rise
And be a kingdom once again !
Rush, the sacred cause to aid,
Beat the despot's power low ;
Strike, or be for ever laid
Low as Poland lieth now !
Strike then, Moslems, brave and true !
Die or conquer !—Allah ! Hu !

GOD FOR POLAND !

Behold where, from behind yon cloud,
A heaven-born form appears to view !
She waveth high a blood-dyed shroud,
That should be, Poland, known to you !
That angel form is—Liberty !
Come once again her sons to greet ;
And that red robe she waves on high
Is Kosciusko's winding-sheet !
And hark ! a voice in thunder rolls—
“ God for Poland and the Poles.”

Long, long, in lands far, far away
Have thy brave sons been doomed to roam ;
Or, writhing 'neath a tyrant's sway,
Have lingered near their still-loved home !
Yet all have watched with eager eye,
And hearkened with a hopeful ear,

For sight or sound when Liberty
Should once again be drawing near !
She comes ! her voice in thunder rolls—
“ God for Poland and the Poles.”

Up, then, and strike a final blow,
Nor longer bide Oppression's laws !
Enough for you your tyrant foe
Is not so strong as once he was !
Hope leads the van, with freedom dear,
Her blood-dyed banner still outspread ;
And smiling o'er ye—ever near—
Is Kosciusko's bleeding shade ;
Whose cheering voice in thunder rolls—
“ God for Poland and the Poles.”

AMBITION.

I would not, for a kingly crown,
Bear on my brow the aching frown
That those must feel—for ever feel—
Whose eyes grow green at others' weal !
Nor should my shoulders long abide
The pressing load of worthless pride ;
The pride that staggers 'neath the store
Of hoarded wealth—and nothing more !
And nothing more :—no orphan's smile,
Or widow's up-borne prayer the while !
Ambition, too ;—that angel—devil !
Fairy good, or fiend of evil !

Of good (to all who good aspire)
The ever proud and smiling sire !
His are the offspring—those who feel
An interest keen in common weal !
Who steady walk their “onward” way,
Unheeding what the mean may say !
Far better ’twere improve one town,
Than, king-like, crush a nation down.
Slight are the wounds—if wounds are made
By spite or envy’s blunted blade,
Which oft we find glides to its mark,
As though ’twere levelled in the dark ;
And oft recoils, to rankling rest
Deep in the purblind aimer’s breast.

From feelings old young feelings grow,
As grafted germs abroad may throw
Of fruit or flower, or harsh or sweet,
The taste to pall, or eye to greet !
Yet on the training much doth pend
Where sweets shall ’gin, or bitters end !
Where careful hands have early caught
The green and tender vines of thought,
Ere strongly wild their tendrils spring,
Or round rough branches rudely cling,
And trained them to a modest height,
To bloom in honour’s healthy light ;
If such the guidance, fair the fruit,
Despite what may cling round the root !
Rank Pride may there in silence lie,
And Spite and Envy, rotting, die.

THE EMIGRANT'S WIFE.

I blushed when first you asked me, dear,
Your little humble home to share,
And said I should a glory there
 Shed ever bright and free ;
But 'twas a maiden's modest blush
That did o'er brow and bosom rush,
For in the sigh I could not hush
 I breathed a "yes" to thee.

Since then that "yes" has ever been
My guide through wedlock's changing scene,
When skies were gloomy or serene,
 'Twas all the same to me ;
Or did a tear steal from my eye
When woes or cares have us come nigh,
It was but when I caught a sigh
 From thee, my mate, from thee.

I did not deem, e'en when a bride,
That I should always smoothly glide
With thee adown life's rolling tide,
 Although I knew 'twould be
As smooth as you could make it, dear,
By that which should smooth all things here
For men like you—life's wear and tear—
 Hard work, I mean, by thee.

But since from bad to worse our state
Has grown, in spite of all, my mate,
And 'tis decreed by man, or fate,
 That thou must cross the sea ;
Yet think not thou alone shalt go—
'Tis now that I can truly show
That I am thine "in weal or woe,"
 As once I pledged to thee.

I love this little cottage hearth,
I love the land that gave me birth,
The land that would be "heaven on earth"
 If all were love like thee ;
But when the time and tide shall come
That takes thee from our much-loved home,
Yet, to whatever land you roam,
 That shall be home to me.

All this, though sad, may be endured,
Far better, dear, than be immured
In gloomy walls, like thieves secured,
 And 'reft of liberty ;
And such our fate if here we stay
The coming of the evil day,
Whilst if in savage lands away,
 We shall at least be free.

THE DESERTED WIFE.

All may without be glad and bright,
The sun may cheer with burnished ray ;
Or Cynthia with her paler light,
May make her watch as bright as day.

But sun or moon at brightest glow,
Would fail one gladdening gleam to dart
Beneath the roof where darkening woe
Had filled its inmate's sorrowing heart.

And so 'twas there, where sat in tears,
Through which she dimly gazed without,
A form whose grief rose not from fears—
Ah no !—she knew no soothing doubt.

For confirmation of her woes,
In all its dread reality,
Before her night and morning rose
In colours of the deepest die.

Now, gently leaning on her knee,
A beauteous boy in silence stood,
Watching her tears fall stealthily,
And listening to her sobs subdued.

Oh, there are in a mother's tears,
When in her children's presence shed,
For them such pangs that only sears
The heart when weeping o'er the dead.

“Mamma”—he softly said—“you chide
Me when I cry, or will not sleep ;
And yet you sleep not,—cannot hide
Your waking eyes which always weep—

It was not so when 'pa was here ;
I then ne'er saw my mother mourn :
Why do you weep my mother dear,
Nor say when father will return ?”

“I hope he never will,”—she said—
“I doubt for thy sake,—hope for mine,
For oh, alas ! to me he's dead,
Yet still he must be, living, thine—

But play my child,—let not my sighs
Waft from thy heart one childish joy ;
A dreary way before thee lies—
I would not haste thee on't, my boy.

Oh man ! how could'st thou cast away
A gem, as this, so brightly dear ?
Can e'er another's smiles repay
Thee for the bliss neglected here ?

I would not for the brightest one
Of all thy sex, have hushed one joy ;
Or wrought to thee, as thou hast done
The wrongs to me, and this our boy.

I pictured other scenes than this
When me in girlhood's prime you woo'd ;
I dreamt not then another's kiss
Would e'er between our lips intrude.

Yet, may the woes you've hurled on me,
Go where thou wilt, be never thine !
May you, my first—last love, ne'er see
The sunless days that now are mine.

'Tis true, I am not wholly 'reft
Of every tie,—of every joy ;
Thou hast to me one blessing left—
Thy beauteous child,—my darling boy.

And he will, when shall end my woes,
Hush, as thou should'st, life's parting sigh ;
Will, in thy stead, all gently close,
With his small hand, my dying eyes."

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

"He is no man
Who puts an unkind hand upon a woman."

I have heard tell that somewhere women are,
By savage custom, made men's loads to bear ;
Not only forced to till the tangled field,
But likewise gather in its scanty yield ;
The corn, too, grind, and when 'tis done, prepare
For each her swarthy spouse the ready fare !
But this, of course, is 'neath a far off zone,
Where civil laws and customs are unknown ;

Yet even there I have as yet not read
That wives' hard labour is by blows repaid !
They may, at worst, when their dark lords have fared,
Eat up the scraps their own hands had prepared ;
But, it would seem, 'tis people " further north,"
Who think they know what woman's work is worth !
In England here it is the female hand
That oft, too oft, must delve the loamy land ;
Must always—sure as harvest-time doth come—
Be mainly forward at each " harvest home."

Ah ! " home," we cry, " is woman's proper sphere !"
And yet, in rural districts, 'twould appear
That " home " means anywhere—the fields around,
Where labour, cheaply paid for, may be found.

It is in England, too, where Commerce finds
The chief employ for female hands ; their minds
Are little cared for ! No ! God's fairest page
Is left in this, our all-enlightened age,
A blank ; or at the most besmeared with soil
That blots it o'er with life-long lasting toil.
And yet it seems—nay, it is really so—
Here laws must females guard from kick or blow !
Yes, here Acts have been made, and Statutes formed,
By which stern justice has been weakly armed—
Armed with a fine to stay the fist or foot
Of each unmanly and un-British brute.

Oh ! give to me the men of whom the weak
May from the strong support in safety seek !
I blush for people who, in such-like cause,
Must be to sacred duties bound by laws ;

And most for those whom honour, law, nor love,
Can in their breasts no throb of manhood move.

Great conquests now, yea, glorious victories,
Do we achieve o'er foreign enemies !
And let us hope the time will shortly come
When peaceful conquests shall be won at home !
We've faithful "allies," strong in deeds of love,
And who will ever faithful allies prove ;
Then let us hope men will reserve their blows,
For such whom they may find are really foes ;
Not deal them out, with savage might and main,
On those who cannot, will not, strike again !
If so we act, we shall deserve the fame
The world attaches to a Briton's name ;
And soon we may, when wars unnatural cease,
Seal with a kiss a long domestic peace.

THE TAILORESS.

A SIMPLE ANNAL OF THE POOR.

Scene—A wretched garret. Time—Midnight.

Sick Husband : "I do think I am a little better, wife, and should be none the worse could I see you set your work by and take some rest."

Set down my work, dear ! no, not yet—
I am but paying off a debt ;
And one that I can ne'er forget
I long have owed to thee ;

For, when both health and strength were thine—
Ere thus laid low by pale decline—
Thy worth of labour, love, was mine,
 And given willingly.

And shall not I thee now requite,
Far as will go my utmost might ?
By day and (hush dear) yes, and night,
 'Twas so you wrought for me.
I could have wished thee better fare
Than my scant pay will bring thee, dear ;
And softer lying, too, than here—
 But ah ! it cannot be.

Bare walls, and straw, and fingers sore,
Wer't thou but well, I could endure ;
Or could my pain thy ease insure,
 No sigh should 'scape me free.
But crushing work, and scanty pay,
Hard labour, both by night and day—
That, dear, has worn thee thus away,
 And now is wearing me.

Look, now, on this gay waistcoat, dear,
Which I have nearly finished here !
'Tis soiled with blood-spots here and there,
 Which will, but should not be.
Ah ! little will its wearer guess
How many hours—how much distress—
It takes to help him cheaply dress—
 How dear to such as me !

It costs us health—debars us, too,
From work all women ought to do ;
But how can such as we go through
 (Who have hard bread to earn)
Domestic duties—make a home
From which our husbands would not roam ;
To which they'd gladly—proudly come !
 We've e'en no time to learn !

In childhood—e'en as children, we
Our mothers and our sisters see
Do work that should our father's be,
 Whilst fathers idling stand !
Aye, stand, or slave for quarter pay !
Aye, stand, and see the trade which they
To learn had thrown their youth away,
 Snatched from their willing hand.

Oh, never ! shall we see, I fear,
The often-vaunted “good time” here,
While women must men's burdens bear,
 Close shut in human sties !
No, never shall we other see
Than sickness, dirt, and poverty,
Till womens' hands and minds are free
 To 'tend to “household ties.”

STANZAS—TO ONE IN HEAVEN.

In thy dark hour of sorrow,
 When health waned away,
And the hope of "to-morrow"
 Shed but a faint ray ;
When this world and its beauties
 Dissolved from thy view,
Then the last of love's duties
 I paid, dear, to you !
I thought—ah ! how gladly—
 How oft had I pressed,
With a heart sinking sadly,
 My brow to thy breast.

Yes—I did remember
 That when summer came,
Or cold, sad December,
 Thou still wert the same !
When false friends passed by me,
 Or frowned upon me,
One true one I'd nigh me,
 And that, love, was thee !
To my heart thou wert cheering
 As spring's brightest skies ;
To mine ears thou wert hearing
 And "light to mine eyes."

But when sickness o'erpowered,
And laid thee, love, low,
On my hearthstone there lowered
The dark brow of woe !
Our young, softly creeping,
Thy pillow drew nigh,
And gazed on thee, weeping,
Scarce knowing for why.
They saw, and knew only,
(And 'numbed were the while),
They sad were and lonely
Without "mother's" smile.

I have seen them smile sadly—
Our brave little race—
When winds have blown madly
Dark storms o'er their face !
I have known them look careless
When scant was their meal,
And troubles bear, tearless,
They scarce could conceal ;
But bending thee o'er, then,
Their chief earthly care,
All prostrate, proved more than
Their brave hearts could bear.

But warm friends had found us,
Who proved by their heed,
As came they around us,
Kind friends in our need !

Their care soothed the pain, dear,
That chrushed thee so weak,
But brought not again, dear,
Health's bloom on thy cheek !
Yet may the Great Power
Grant this my poor prayer—
In *their* saddened hour
Repay them their care.

THE SEVEN AGES OF WOMAN.

See yon sweet little cherub her fingers entwining
With childish delight in her fond mother's hair,
As calm on her breast it is gently reclining,
Receiving the sweets Nature stores for her there.
Oh ! gaze on those eyes, as they upwards are beaming,
And trace in the glances so fondly they dart
The soft germ of Love—for of love it is dreaming—
As the Rose of Affection doth bud in her heart.

With fairy-like figure behold her now bounding
Where youth's fancy guideth her footsteps along ;
Or list to her voice, like a silver bell sounding,
As gaily she carols her first gush of song.
Scarce fairer than she is the wax-toy she dresses,
And thus in her youth doth the mother impart
To that which she guardeth with care and caresses,
As the Rose of Affection doth bud in her heart.

Now a rosy-cheeked maiden so gaily she's skipping,
Confidingly pressing her chosen one's arm,
As over the greensward together they're tripping,
And each one beholding a fresh-budding charm.
Oh ! give her the love that she feels for thee only,
Nor e'er let her languish far from thee apart
To mourn o'er thy falsehood—though in the world—lonely,
For the Rose of Affection expands in her heart.

Hark, hark ! from yon steeple a glad peal is ringing,
As forth from its porch comes a gay, smiling throng ;
And see, in the midst, to that manly form clinging,
Comes she, 'mongst the happy, the most blest, along.
Oh ! think not with sorrow her bosom is heaving,
And though to her brow burning blushes may start,
Yet 'tis with the blest thought that two hearts are cleaving
Round the Rose of Affection that blooms in her heart.

Behold her now happy beside the bright hearth-place,
With prattling offspring the goodwife she plays ;
At home, 'neath the roof of her loved husband's birthplace,
She smiles as he talks of their young wooing days.
What, though all without be both darksome and dreary,
There's that in her bosom averts the cold dart,
And beams from her bright eye for ever unwearied—
'Tis the Rose of Affection that blooms in her heart.

Next a grand-dam behold her, so proudly presiding
With matronly grace o'er a circle of bliss,
Where youth's forward glee she is smilingly chiding,
Yet softens each word with a gift or a kiss.
Though care o'er her brow many furrows have gathered,
And sorrow hath caused many big drops to start,
Still grief, joy, or sorrow, hath never yet withered
The Rose of Affection that blooms in her heart.

Lo ! how sadly yon grey-headed mourner is grieving
While clasping that cold clammy brow to his breast ;
The wife of his bosom is placidly leaving
Her once happy home for the " mansion of rest."
Her fast-drooping eyelids once more gently sever,
A last look of love on that mourner to dart,
Then, pressing his hand, close " for ever and ever,"
And the Rose of Affection dies but with her heart.

BOYHOOD'S DAYS.

A REMINISCENCE OF LEOMINSTER.

Come ! let's be children once again ;
Turn Fancy back to days gone by ;
Forget awhile that we are men,
And view the world with youthful eye !
Aye—let's of boyhood's days be dreaming—
Be young again, if but in seeming.

K

It may repay us better far
Than peering in the future's gloom ;
At least, past scenes more certain are
Than those which, perhaps, may never come ;
And, of the present, all are feeling
That which needeth no revealing.

Yes—let us dream our youth once more !
Those fairy days which do but seem,
As back we turn their minutes o'er,
A dim, a half-forgotten dream ;
Yet days which, though we're half forgetting,
How few but wholly are regretting !

Say ye, whose school-days were mis-spent,
Do you not wish once more to look,
With youthful eyes, in study bent,
On " primer " or on " copy book ?"
Ah ! what would not such now be giving,
Could they their lost days be retrieving ?

The gamester, too, what would he " stake,"
Could he but change his blood-shot eyes
For those which laughed for laughter's sake,
When clear they shone as summer skies ?
Whilst such are manhood's days abusing,
Their richest stake, too, are they losing.

But let me now in fancy roam,
All free from manhood's cares and toils,
Once more around my childhood's home ;
Wade streams—climb hills—and clamber stiles—
Or lie amid the perfumed hay,
And dream the sunny hours away.

Ah ! well do I remember still,
(And memory sweetest pleasure yields,)
When young I roamed sweet Eaton Hill—
Midsummer meads, and Caswal fields—
And Fancy now is each adorning
With garlands grown in "life's gay morning."

I see the Grange—the old Church tower—
I hear (though nothing else I hear)
Its chimes ring out the fleeting hour
That brought too soon my manhood drear !
I hear its sabbath bell still tolling,
And, 'neath its roof, the organ rolling !

I sit there now, with other boys,
As there I sat, long years ago ;
When promise of eternal joys,
Or threats of everlasting woe,
Came more unheeded than the morning
Clouds that come of storms fore-warning.

Ah ! why are we not wise when young ?

Why not in morning see the cloud
That o'er our life's noon-day is hung,

Ere storms come bursting long and loud ?
Why only see in distance "looming,"
Nought but days of sunshine coming ?

In starting life's long journey through,

Youth seem as though they did believe
That here they had not far to go ;

Had, in this world, not long to live ;
Whilst of hereafter heed they never,
As though they here should stay for ever !

WILD FLOWERS.

By babbling streamlet boldly springing,
Round rock and ruin weakly clinging,
Or aloft fantastic flinging,

With fairy wing,
Ye now are busy hither bringing
Us back the spring.

But oh, ye are not sadly coming !

Nor laugh ye winter's knell is booming,
But softly smile, at morn and gloaming,

As though to say—
"Stout Plenty o'er the fields is coming
Again this way."

By the wayside meekly shining,
On green and sunny banks reclining ;
Or in gloomy woods repining,

Rank weeds beneath,

Like genius, humble, slow declining

To early death.

By the lip of gushing fountain,
Decking hill, and dale, and mountain,
Storm and sunshine both accounting

As e'en the same ;

Like those who plod, rebuffs surmounting,

The road to fame.

Though morning's frosts come keen and nipping,
Or noon-tide's sun your sap be sipping,
Though evening's dew falls cold and dripping ;

Whate'er betide,

Still, though at times ye may be weeping,

Your time ye bide :

Whilst rarer flowers in gardens gay,
Though tended both by night and day,
May, forced, give out a feeble ray

Of sickly bloom,

And which a breath may chase away

Quick as 't had come.

Ye are dear wildlings of the earth,
The type of men of humble birth ;
Those who, uncared for, blossom forth,
E'en anywhere ;
Of whom the world would feel the worth
Were they more rare.

ODE TO IGNORANCE.

IL PENSEROSO.

Go, lean and haggard spectre, go !
Why with thy misty form still linger here ?
Combating with, as yet, a foe
Unequal all to thee—thy darksome sphere
Is there,
Where Holy Writ has ne'er been known,
Or Science' beauties e'er been shown—
Then hence ! away ! and take with thee
Thy dark, prolific progeny.
Take Sin along—thy eldest born—
And darkly dwell with her where morn
Breaks not, to show to mortal eyes
God's fruitful earth, His seas, and skies.
Sin should not, would not, dare to stray
So free abroad wert thou away.
And, lurking here and there, thou'lt find
Gaunt Superstition, old and blind ;
Professing she can cure at will,
For soul and body, every ill ;

Take her away ! and take with thee
Her half-tamed sister, Bigotry :
Away with each ! and take beside
Tall, purse-proud, worthless, painted Pride :
Each own thee mother—all may trace,
At once, thy likeness in each face.
Nor wilt thou hence but there will go
Vile Vice, and its attendant, Woe ;
And when away there will be less
Of Gluttony and Drunkenness ;
Men then shall see, both rich and poor,
How sickness cometh to their door.
Dark Crime, too, bound in chains or free,
Where'er thou art will bide with thee :
If here thou lingerest, here 'twill stay,
But banish thee it will away :
Man may not see to go aright
Whilst thou stand'st hovering in his light.
Take Filth along with thy dark crew,
Both outward Filth and inward, too ;
That hidden " dirt " man's heart inside,
Beneath whatever cloak 'tis hid—
E'en these are thine, begot of thee
(A mongrel breed) by Vanity.
Thy thick-head offspring, Party-spirit,
That ofttimes crushes modest merit
(That will not see clear right from wrong),
When thou dost go, will go along :
And if thou could'st take Poverty,
Oh ! what a blessing it would be !

ODE TO KNOWLEDGE.

L'ALLEGRO.

Come, Knowledge, bright-eyed spirit come,
Step boldly forth and spread thy sweets abroad ;

Let thy light cheer the labourer's home
And ease him of—when in his poor abode—

The load

That heavily doth press him down,
And like a cloud doth o'er him frown.
Then come, oh, quickly come, and bring
Him light and life upon thy wing ;
Thy soft, consoling, influence shed
Benignly on each drooping head ;
Nay, deeper shine,—thy warmth impart,
With cheering rays, to each lone heart.
Then haste and prune the fruitful tree
Of intellectuality ;

The stem on which will surely shoot
Green boughs and ever healthful fruit ;
But left to run all wild and lone
Will bear but hurtful thorns thereon.
Come when thou wilt, at least will come
Forgetfulness in Misery's home ;
E'en there, where men go mad to see
That earthly curse, gaunt Poverty,
Crush down, with oft-repeated blow,
Love, wedded or parental, low ;
Or if not absolutely mad
Yet oftentimes drunk—almost as bad.

All this will take (and nothing less),
Thy strength, oh, Knowledge ! to suppress.
Go, visit there, where darkly lurk
By day, their Maker's fairest work ;
Those who, to nightly charms disclose,
Must " paint the lily," tinge the rose ;
E'en those, who, hadst thou sooner come,
May not have withered e'er their bloom.
Go, search in corners dark and drear,
In lanes and alleys far and near,
And find, if seed be cast around,
Soil there as rich as elsewhere found !
Where found'st thou Cobbett, Franklin ?—where
Sweet Robin of the Braes of Ayr ?
Men, who, made mighty by thy might,
Will live, when in oblivion's night
Those who mere Fortune's smiles received
Shall be as though they never lived.
Then come ; and where my steps are bent
May follow—if not sweet content—
At least a respite from the care
That Labour's sons are born to bear.
It is with such thy strength should be,
Who stagger on all wearily ;
Who faint beneath their toilsome load
Ere half-way on life's rugged road ;
Or those who blindly plunge along,
Scarce knowing if or right or wrong :
So prove thou wilt, if nothing more,
A guide,—a solace to the poor.

WOMAN'S LOVE.

Thou canst not see it in her face,
Nor on her trembling eyelids hung ;
Nor, though it robs her of each grace,
E'er hear it from her faltering tongue,
So mute is woman's love.

Thou canst not buy it : ah, no ! love,
Such love as they alone can feel,
E'en gold untold would fail to move—
'Tis hearts, pure hearts, in which they deal ;
So rich is woman's love.

Thou canst not steal it—though it be
A thing as soft as mountain snow,
It can be firm, and will be free
To fall where'er it lists to go ;
So leal is woman's love.

Thou canst not lose it—when 'tis gained,
Like fate, 'twill cling unto thee fast !
It may, and is, too often pained,
But still 'twill tend thee to the last.
So true is woman's love.

TRIBUTE OF THE HEART.

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!”—SCOTT.

Oh, rich—how rich is this red land of ours,
Through which sweet *Vaga* ever gently pours
Her stream of seeming liquid silver ! Here,
No rugged mountains, wasteful, brown and bare,
Frown o’er the valleys, closing thence each ray
Of Night’s pale queen, or golden god of Day !
Here no volcano flames terrific forth,
To hurl destruction o’er the nether earth !
No—all is placid—peacefulness and toil
May glean full garners from our pregnant soil ;
On falling slope, and upland’s teeming breast,
Is found some nurture, for or man or beast.

And living worthies—worthy of the land,
Loom on my view,—a bright and chosen band !

Oh, VAGA ! bravely have thy sons of War,
Fought round Bellona’s blood-bespattered car ;

Raised their strong arm, and bared each gallant breast,
As Crimea's hard-won fields will long attest !
Yes—long will fame, upon her banner show,
A HORTON living, and a WEBB laid low !
And daring BIDDULPH long may live to hear
His country's voice, in many a heart-felt cheer !
Nor will our COX, or HORN, forgotten be,
Whilst men will fight that nations may be free.

Thy fate, oh FREEMAN ! all men must deplore—
Breathing thy last upon the hoped-for shore !
E'en there, where all around bright laurels grew,
Thy glorious visions faded from thy view !
Like to our LYE ! *his* heart, too long up-pent,
Burst, with its throbs, its too-frail tenement,
And lay (alas ! too soon) a noble wreck,
'Midst mourning comrades, on Colombo's deck.

How much more proudly had they fallen there,
Where fell our WALSHAM, or where bled our WEARE ;
Dealing, with failing strength on each his foe,
The dearly-purchased, blood-bought blow for blow ;
Or, pressing forward with our BRIGHT the brave,
Found on the field a scarce less honoured grave—
Scarce less—for willing hearts in weakly frame,
With nations grateful find their meed of fame.

I may not curse the heavy arm, that slew,
On Alma's hill, our brave and gallant DEW ;
Nor yet the hand that shed his kindred blood,
To 'carnadine the Baltic's rolling flood !
They fell by tools, moved in a moody hour,
To carve out rapine for Imperial power ;

A power, how vain—how weak—how rotten now !
No stronger than a pauper's corse laid low.

And peaceful heroes oft-times pass me near,
Whose wars are won, *sans* buckler, sword, or spear !
Their only armour from the shafts of spite
Is that firm breast-plate—ever-honest RIGHT !
And lo ! where he, the foremost in the cause
Of Trade and Commerce, moves, with scarce a pause !
His steady hand a half-wound scroll doth bear,
On which there doth one magic word appear—
'Tis "PROGRESS !" yea, and ever has it stood
His watchword clear through bad report or good !
High waved his scroll—and straightway thundered forth
The groaning Train athwart the rib-bound earth !
Again 'twas raised (and with no long delay),
And healthful measures swept disease away !
In short—*Improvement*, with determined air,
Moved onward here, as long 't had done elsewhere ;
And time will come when men shall raise the cry
That shouts the honoured name of "ANTHONY !"

And who is She, who, with the ready hand,
Aids high and low, throughout our favoured land ?
Should Agriculture need encouragement,
Prompt, as a debt of honour, aid is sent !
Or should an almshouse, for our poor and old,
Lack *prestige* in its plan, or funds for gold,—
'Tis ready each,—and is as freely given,
As comes the earth-refreshing rains from heaven !

Ask who she is, and 'tis at once to own
Thyself a pilgrim here, and all unknown ;
And my poor pen, as yet unknown to fame,
Shall not dare hint her truly *noble name*.

The sisters, ART and SCIENCE, here have smiled,
On sons, who on their path have bravely toiled !
Yes ! view yon canvass, where so life-like lies,
A form disdaining life's last agonies ;
Calm and collected—speaking words of rue,
To one whose iron will a throne o'erthrew !
Or there, where silent sits, in cabin state,
The hero-victim of a glorious fate—
Brave Nelson—musing o'er the morrow's strife,
And victory—purchased freely with his life.
Yes—works like these thy pencil shall proclaim
A LUCY's genius, and European fame ;
And *Sculptured Art*—as genius near allied—
Will place our JENNINGS by our LUCY's side ;
Whilst HIGHEST SCIENCE proud must be to own
Our HARPTON's LORD as her most honoured son.

And *Music*—sweetest nymph of all the “ nine !”
What child of Vaga worships at thy shrine ?
Where bides a “ WOODYATT,” at whose thrilling voice,
Enraptured crowds would wonder and rejoice ?
Ah ! where ? what blighted hope—what crushing fear
Hath dimmed the lustre of thy bright career ?

Yet *Music* now has not affrighted flown,
But bides with children, Vaga, all thine own !

Yes—hark ! her voice in thrilling tones doth roll,
From the sweet lips, or fingers of a COLE.

And lo ! where gentle, graceful *Poetry*,
Smiles o'er her son of promise, "T. H. C. ;"
Too modest still to venture forth a name,
That will, ere yet, shine on the scroll of fame !
For not alone doth poetry engage
His active mind upon her pictured page ;
But "Tales" of truth, with nature near allied,
Flow from his pen—whilst faithful "Essays" glide
From the same font—in sparkling currents, pure
As any found in modern literature.

Nor must my humble muse, a WERMSS pass o'er,
As rich in kindness, as in classic lore !
No : lowly bend, with reverential air,
And grateful own *his* early fostering care ;
For weak thy wing, and rude, my muse, thy lay,
When fluttered thou across his useful way !
Nor shall thy refuge, free—impartial "TIMES,"
Forgotten be in these my strengthened rhymes.

And where, oh Vaga ! on thy favoured ground,
May living type of GRATITUDE be found ?
Fair child, of still yet fairer parents born ;
Glad, yet not laughing, like the glowing morn !
No gaily bright nor bursting beauty's thine,

But thou dost smile through veil of texture fine ;
A veil that doth thy loveliness relieve,
Like shadows softly spread o'er mellow eve !
Should'st sing—thy voice, though rude, or sweetly clear,
Its notes may fall upon the half-turned ear,
Yet tells no tale, the tender heart would move,
To render up an ardent love for love !
No :—plaintive twittering is thy modest tongue,
Like thankful robin's artless winter song ;
And such the lay, at eve, or early dawn,
That warms the lowly heart of

THOMAS VAUGHAN.

THE END.

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